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GOD IN OUR LIVES

GOD IN OUR LIVES

BY

ROLLAND W. SCHLOERB

He is not far from any one of us:
for in Him we live and move and
have our being.

—*St. Paul*

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GOD IN OUR LIVES

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To

E. G. S.

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Preface

These chapters are the attempt of a minister to answer a question asked by an officer of his church. The query is implicit in the following suggestion which was made in a regular meeting of the church board: "I wish someone would tell us what this church means when it uses the word God." To assume that the answer to this question can be given by any one person in a few pages is as preposterous as trying to accede to the request of the leaders of a busy conference of boys who asked that the writer be given four minutes to tell fifteen hundred boys what God is. The best that one person can do is to begin the clarification of his own thought, thus calling others to the task which each must do for himself. I am deeply indebted to countless thinkers and seekers both past and present who have sought not only "to love the Lord their God with their whole mind," but who have likewise yearned to bring their wills and affections into living harmony with Him.

Introduction

The religious person seeks to live in harmony with the reality which produces the highest life in man and society. He *seeks*. His religion is a quest which has been shared by many before him. Mere vegetating is not enough for him. Casual drifting is insufficient. He is one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness. In company with the sincere followers of all religions he is an earnest person. He may not be successful in finding the highest life, but he seeks it with eagerness. His "heart" is right.

He seeks to *live*. True religion permeates life. It is not limited to the acceptance of a dogma nor to the performance of a rite. It is a quality which pervades every thought and act. The religious person is religious in work as well as in worship, in activity as well as in meditation, on Monday as well as on Sunday.

He seeks the *highest life*. What is the highest life? When is a person fulfilling his highest potentialities? Upon this there is wide difference of opinion. The ends for which men live—the final causes which draw them—vary in the different cultures. It is enough to say at this point that the Christian has found in Jesus the picture of the kind of person he would like to be. He has found in the community for which Jesus worked and suffered the kind of society for which he would like to toil.

Religion, however, is more than a quest. It is also a response. It is a response to that *reality which produces the highest life*. The religious person does not seek in a vacuum. He is a part of a real universe. He desires to discover what that reality is upon which he is dependent and with which he must work if he would fulfill his highest possibilities.

The religions have varied greatly in describing this reality. One group believes that all is mind. Matter is but the manifestation of mind. Evil is wrong thinking; good is right thinking. If all is mind then the religious seeker attains his highest life as he brings his life into harmony with God by correct thinking.

Another group believes that matter is the basic reality. For these people, mind is only the function of aggregations of matter and energy. The economic interest is basic in human life. All behavior is economically determined. For those who believe that this is a true picture of the reality in which we live and move, life is realized as one brings his aspirations and acts into line with that fact. A communist is religious in the sense that he is earnest and devoted in building his life philosophy upon this interpretation of reality. All others seem to him to be deceiving themselves. He alone is bringing his life into harmony with the hard reality.

The Christian, on the other hand, believes that Jesus was supreme in his knowledge of the reality which produces the good life. He brought his life into touch with the resources which are present. He found the God who gives radiance and joy to those who learn to live in accordance with His purposes and will.

If we are to use the word God to denote that reality which is life-fulfilling, then nothing is more important than clarifying our conception of God. This could be called "existential thinking" (to use a Barthian phrase without necessarily accepting the content which Barth puts into it), for it is the kind of thinking which is vital for our existence and for our highest life.

IS GOD REAL?

You say you buried God (weeping you say it)
And split the flesh to its essential parts—
But you have left us bodies bright with flame
And buried God no deeper than our hearts.[1]

—*Paul Engle.*

The first part of the battle for reality in religion has been won. I mean that part of it which relates to religious belief—the attainment of religious belief, the formulation of it, and the confession of it. The seeker after God is not now hampered and baffled by the supposed necessity of believing things about God which he does not truly believe, or of defining such belief as he has in terms which are not truly his.[2]

—*E. H. Jeffs*

You do not so much as touch the threshold of religion so long as you are detained by the phantoms of your thought: the very gate of entrance to it, the moment of its new birth, is the discovery that your gleaming ideal is the everlasting *real*, no transient brush of a fancied angel wing, but the abiding presence and persuasion of the Soul of souls: short of this there is no object given you, and you have not even reached the specified point of "admiration."[3]

—*James Martineau*

I. IS GOD REAL?

Henry van Dyke once wrote a story entitled "The Lost Word."[4] That forgotten word was "God." When Hermas, the hero of the story, needed most to speak the word, his conversation faded into silence. The word "God" is not lost today. It is used on every hand. Profane lips speak it in oaths. Worshippers sing it in hymn and anthem. They mention it in prayer. Often it appears on pages of our literature both sacred and secular. It is stamped upon our coins. The *word* is not lost.

However, one cannot but wonder whether the word stands for anything real. A person may have lost everything but the word. It is necessary for him to ask anew what the word means. What is the reality of which the word is the symbol?

When the Christian says, "Jesus," he thinks of something real. Jesus is to him a person of flesh and blood. He lived in a particular time and place. Eyes beheld him. Ears heard his words. Loving hands touched the hem of his garment. The movement of history attests the fact that he lived as an initiating and creative power among men. He is real.

The Bible is real. It is a body of literature which has come down to us. One cannot say that the Bible is a dream, for it is here to be read and observed. Whatever may be our judgment concerning the meaning of these books, we cannot deny their reality.

The church is real. One can see the people who constitute it, and he can observe the activities of its group life. Although a church may not have a man's loyalty, he cannot deny its reality. But God? *Is God real?*

In seeking an answer to this question we ask ourselves

what people have meant when they said "God." I believe that it has designated for them that reality in harmony with which man achieves his highest life. God is that reality which it is most important for us to know, and in harmony with which we must live if we are to find meaning and joy in life.

Of course, in trying to say what is most important and what most truly characterizes the determiner of our destiny (to use Pratt's term)[5] many different ideas have been given. Some have thought that the universe was controlled by many whimsical, personal gods—creatures much like ourselves whom one was required to please. Others have thought of a vague potency at the heart of things. Nations have thought of God as a tribal general who supported his own people. In the interests of his own honor he brought defeat upon the enemies of his favorites. Such a provincial view has seemed intolerable to others. They have thought of God as a Father of all mankind.

What varied conceptions have fastened themselves upon this word! The high school boy thinks of God as a "kind of Father Time with a baseball bat in his hand, ready to clout one over the head for every misdeed he is about to commit." A character in Sutherland's *Arches of the Years* says, "My visualization of the Creator was as a stern old gentleman with a grey beard, who did not wish people to be happy."[6] A college student confesses that God is to him only an "oblong blur."

One could go on almost endlessly in giving the concepts which have attended the word "God." This means that in describing the reality upon which we depend for fullest life many different ideas have developed. Such concepts have genuine motivating power in the lives of those who hold them, even though the concepts do not correspond to anything real. These ideas are so varied that there are those who feel that in the interest of clarity the word "God" ought to be dropped from our religious vocabulary. Dimnet gives voice to this conviction:

It seems unquestionable that, in spite of its sanctity, in spite of the innumerable references made to it by the great poets and great thinkers, the word God, as a human term, is not satisfactory. It has too long a past; it is too charged with conflicting associations; it has been used in too many different perspectives both by ecclesiasticism and by people violently opposed to ecclesiasticism; what is worse, it has been blasphemed too often for it not to show a fringe in which theism, paganism, and pure unbelief mix up their colors. Sometimes sensitive souls perceive something frigid about it: it is only the cold residuum of age-long controversies.[7]

In the light of such a position we ought to make plain at the outset that we are not defending a word. We may find ourselves fighting against each other, when in reality we are speaking about the same fundamental matters although we are not using the same word to designate them. I believe that there is value in continuing to use the word, even though it is necessary to put new meaning into it, and even though there is danger of conveying misconceptions because God may mean one thing to the person speaking and something else to the person hearing. In any event, it is not necessary to quarrel with the person who desires to discuss the reality with which we must work to achieve our highest life but who does not feel justified in using the word "God."

An illustration of this approach to language is given to us by an incident in the life of Jesus. At the Roman court Jesus was asked by Pilate, "Are you a king?"[8] Jesus, knowing what Pilate meant by a king, might indeed have responded with a categorical No. He was not a king in the sense that Pilate was using the word. He was not intending to lead an army by which to bring about the forceful overthrow of Caesar. However, instead of replying in the negative, Jesus said, "Yes, I am a king but my kingdom is not of this world." He used the word, but he hastened to add what he meant by it. It is this method

which we propose to follow in clarifying our thought of God.

Every believer in God likes to think that his God is real. He regards it as an insult to be told that he made a God because he wanted one. Ancient peoples ridiculed their enemies by accusing them of moulding their gods with their own hands. Today men deride each other by saying that their god is the projection of their own wishes. Such a god is not real—he is only the distillation of a human desire, a *Wunschwesen.*

Paul once came to a place in which many images of the gods were found.[9] Athens seemed to him very religious. And yet the images did not represent the real God to him. They were the works of men's hands. They had no basis in reality. The unknown God—the God who was real—Paul wanted to present to them. Is Paul's God any more real than theirs? Hear what he says: "God is not far from any one of us, for it is he in whom we live and move and have our being." God is that reality in harmony with whom we achieve our highest life. To Paul *what is most really life-giving* is God.

Looking upon the universe around him, Paul gave his answer concerning the nature of God. Each of us has that same opportunity and responsibility. If we want to be realistic in this quest, we cannot be content merely to accept the descriptions which others have given. Furthermore, we must continually be on our guard lest we imagine a God who would please our fancy. Our supreme concern is to discover what is *given*, the *real* which it is most important for us to know and to whom we must respond in order to realize our highest life.

Instead of asking "Is God real?" we now ask, "What is the reality in which we live and move? *That life-giving reality shall be our God.*"

GOD—THE GREAT MYSTERY

Flaming stars in endless spaces
  Sending forth their peaceful light
Make us pause with upraised faces,
  Wonder-stilled, O God of Might.[1]

We are living in a world which is but a little island of the known, washed on every shore by the waters of the unknown.[2]

—*Kant*

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed. This insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men.[3]

—*Albert Einstein*

II. GOD—THE GREAT MYSTERY

Looking out upon the reality in which we live and move, we are impressed with the majesty and mystery of the universe. Our life is placed in the midst of a mighty creative process. This process was at work long before we arrived within it. We know that we did not bring ourselves to birth. We are but specks in an ongoing stream of life. Human minds are aware of mysteries which they do not comprehend. In the acknowledgment of his creaturehood and in the realization of his finiteness, a thoughtful person pauses in awe.

Schleiermacher has grounded religion in this feeling of dependence.[4] I find something authentic in that response to reality. Who cannot but feel his dependence as he contemplates the short time during which we live on this planet? Aeons have passed before our coming. The human part of the drama of existence is but an instant in the long ages.

Many have felt their dependence as they contemplated the vastness of this enveloping reality. Beneath the stars man is a little creature. Conan Doyle, in one of his stories, suggests that everyone ought upon occasion to take a "star bath." There he can see his life in new perspective, realizing how trifling is much of his over-anxious striving. Others, like Pascal, bow before the deeps of the firmament and say, "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me."

We feel our littleness as we remember how small is the area of our knowledge. Meanings elude us. Our senses give us only a small portion of possible experiences. And, strange as it may seem, the advance of knowledge does not remove the sense of mystery. Those whose circle of knowledge is

small have a correspondingly small circumference of ignorance, while those who know the most are aware of more that they do not know. Our greatest minds have felt that they were only picking up a few pebbles on the shores of the ocean of knowledge. Einstein finds his religion in this sense of cosmic mystery.

Mighty, mysterious, and vast is the reality in which we live and move. The recognition of this fact lies at the very heart of religion. And yet such an acknowledgment has its dangers. It may open the door to many abuses. Someone has said that when we know not what to worship, we worship we know not what. Barth thinks of God as the "Wholly Other." He is the completely mysterious. We know *that* he is but we cannot know *what* he is. We cannot by searching find out God. His ways are past finding out. One who desires to respond to such a God can only wait for him to reveal himself.

God as the great mystery becomes a gift to the human imagination. Since he cannot be known, he can only be imagined. All sorts of projections are possible into the shrine of the unknown god. Each person can fill the niche with his own image of deity. A religious outlook which begins with a realistic temper, acknowledging the majesty of the universe, might end in the extremely subjective mood, which makes its god in its own image.

Further, a religious response which begins and ends with the recognition of the mysterious immensity of the enveloping reality, may result in a celebration of man's inferiority. Fear may be its dominant mood. A God who is enshrouded in mystery may be good or bad, but at least man is as nothing before him. Such an approach to God may cripple effort and destroy personality. Hocking has well expressed this pitfall:

> So long as the unknown of the world is simple *mystery*, a mere "It is known," man is made more a servant than before by his religious experience. His worship will take on depressing

and violent aspects; his consciousness will become a perpetual celebration of his own inferiority. He will become a devotee of the fearful and the immense, which have always for their own sake an inherent fascination for man. . . . Hence in all ages of the world, the mere sense of mystery, as the discerning of something beyond the bounds of ignorance, has claimed its victims; there are always those who are capable of throwing themselves beneath the wheels of a cosmic Juggernaut, finding in pure abandonment to the infinite if not a cure for human trouble, at least an anaesthesia for all ills.[5]

In spite of these dangers, I believe that at the heart of the response to the God in whom we live and move lies a recognition of the majesty and mystery of creative power. Our lives are ultimately dependent. We see in part. We know in part. This suggests the need of tentativeness in all definitions of God. One cannot put a period at the end of any definition of God. Of no description of God can one say, "Only this and nothing more."

In speaking of that highest reality we must have recourse to symbols. The word "God" itself becomes a symbol. I have a friend who sings in a church. He does not think of God as personal. His concept of God is vague. I asked him what he meant when he sang of God. He replied, "When I say 'God', I think only of *something big*." God cannot be wrapped up in words and delivered to the door of another mind. Just as our eyes, looking into the infinities of the stellar spaces, come to rest and call the sky "blue," so our minds and spirits, feeling their dependence upon a great power, come to rest by saying "God."

Music, poetry and pictures become symbols by which we respond to the majesty of God. Silence is a sacrament. The Indian on his horse waits with arms outstretched before "The Great Spirit." The lover looks into the eyes of his beloved, the parent peers into the eyes of a child, the nature lover watches the course of a storm, the peaceful shining of a star, or the growth of a plant—each one pauses

in reverence before the wonder of the reality in which all live and move.

To me this is the beginning of learning to live in harmony with reality—*the recognition that we are creatures in the midst of a mysterious and wondrous universe.* To use the words of Van Dusen:

> The beginning of religion—the only beginning which gives to any of us promise of a successful outcome—is the attitude of one who bows, awe-struck, helpless, penitent, wondering, before the Divine Majesty. That is the sound beginning, not because it is a beautiful or pious or trusting attitude, but for the sole and sufficient reason that it precisely corresponds with the truth of the matter. For we do stand, all of us, whenever wisdom guides our minds to sane humility, face to face with the great Divine Majesty who is the Sovereign of our fate and before whom we must sit down as little children—to learn, and to worship.[6]

Does this mean, therefore, that religion must be only the celebration of vagueness? Can the religious person do more than indulge in secret Socratic rejoicing that he has arrived at the place where he knows that he cannot know God? He is hardly forced to such abject abnegation. As he enters into his religious heritage, he believes that there are revelations and discoveries which others have experienced before him, and which enable him to know better how to bring his life into fruitful relationship with the source of all life. He likewise obeys the advice to "lift up his eyes and see," for God may not be far from any one of us. The sense of the mystery of God prevents us from accepting too closed a picture of the universe, but it does not deter us from seeking to understand the realities of the environment of which we are a part.

GOD—AND ORDER

Whirling orb and life unresting,
Following order without flaw,
Give to human spirits, questing,
Faith to work, O God of Law.

Whatever we may think of the ultimate origin of the characteristics of the created world there can be no doubt but that that world has a definite character and when once created it imposes further limitations upon God. For one thing, it is a world of time. Events are successive. Results follow preparations. Growth and progress mean lowly origins. Also, it is a moral order in which men reap what they sow and God cannot intervene to prevent the harvest, even when it is red with the blood of the innocent, without turning moral order into moral chaos. Also, it is a world of dependable natural events (even if we can only use such terms as "natural law" in a very sophisticated sense.) Even God could not make the world a beneficent chaos in which only pleasing accidents happen without destroying most of the conditions which are essential for the development of character and the development of intelligence among men.[1]

—*John Bennett*

There's magic all around us
In rocks and trees, and in the minds of men,
Deep hidden springs of magic.
He that strikes
The rock aright, may find them where he will.[2]

—*Alfred Noyes*

III. GOD—AND ORDER

A primitive man, walking through a forest in a storm, is struck on the head by a falling limb. He sees the lightning cleave a giant tree. The wind destroys his dwelling. If he were asked to describe the reality in which he lives and moves, he would no doubt say that it is peopled with many personal beings. Some are kindly disposed toward him; others vent their spleen upon him. All that happens is the result of their whims. A falling cocoanut is the well-aimed missile of a malevolent god. To live in harmony with such reality involves one in the task of cosmic diplomacy, whereby he keeps the good will of some gods and averts the ill will of others.

A modern man looks at the same universe through different eyes. For him it is axiomatic to assume that there is order and law in the world about him. If he is struck on the head by a falling apple, he does not begin procedures to placate the god who threw the apple—he aims to discover the law which makes apples fall. For him, the world of nature is not capricious. It has integrity. One can depend upon the orderliness by which it works.

Of course, this does not mean that all men see God in this orderly process, nor that they are certain that this law-abiding nature of the world about them is a manifestation of God. Many have rather felt that God is present only when a regular order is violated. If a stone falls down, that seems to be an event in the ordinary course of nature. If the stone should fly upward, such an event would be caused by God. An axe-head sinks—that is natural. An axe-head floats—that is a work of God. It was said of a certain Peruvian king that he believed the sun could not be a god because it did the same thing every day.

On the other hand, there are those who see in this law-

abiding character of the universe the manifestation of integrity and dependability. They may call this an "act of God," or they may merely make the observation of the fact of order without saying, "Here I find God." In any event, it is becoming increasingly plain that those who desire to live in harmony with reality must recognize the orderliness and dependability of the universe in which our lives are cast.

This is a disturbing thought. It means that we are surrounded by a process which is impartial in its working. Relentlessly it moves onward without regard to its effect upon living beings. And yet the alternative to such an orderly universe is not altogether pleasing to contemplate.

A farmer plants corn. Let us suppose, now, that the reality in which he lives and moves is controlled by the whims of little gods. Having planted his corn, the farmer waits in fear, wondering what the gods are about to give him. He has planted corn, but he has no assurance that he will reap what he sowed. He will get what the gods want to give him. Let us suppose, further, that the gods in an aesthetic mood give him, not a field of corn, but an acre of flowers. Half of them are Black-eyed Susans and half are Sweet Williams. Romantic indeed! But what a difficult world in which to work or to act with assurance. One could never be sure of anything.

In an orderly world, faith is possible. One can act with conviction if he believes that obedience to the laws of life will bring rewards. The reality in which his existence is rooted is something with which to cooperate, not a cohort of capricious sprites to cajole.

How could a mason work with assurance in a universe governed by personal whims? He would lay each stone with trepidation. It might go east or west, north or south, up or down, or the gods in a playful moment might make it follow the example of Simon's thumbs and cause it to move "wiggle-waggle." In a universe governed by whimsical powers, any irregularity might follow. But we live

in a reality which is orderly in its working. The mason places the stone with confidence because he is convinced that gravity will always draw it down.

However, that fact has sinister implications for human life. It means that if the stone drops from the second floor, it will fall on a person walking underneath. That person may be a little child. Or he may be the wisest and best person in the community. That individual may be a mother of a large family. No matter who the person may be, no benevolent god will poise this stone in midair until the danger is over. And if the most despicable character is passing by, the stone will fall just the same.

How differently various people have interpreted this fact of the orderly impartiality of natural law! Some have seen in it a reality indifferent to human values. To Jesus it indicated that the universe was in the care of a father who had no favorites. He allowed the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. He made his sun to shine on good and bad alike. Jesus might have added that cyclones and droughts and floods come upon all alike. Our physical life is placed in an arena where one must always "live dangerously," but the impartiality of the process meant to Jesus that God was good.

Physical life is achieved, not by teasing a god nor by wheedling something out of a temperamental deity—it is won by discovering the laws of the physical universe and by living in harmony with them. A scientist, who is trying to discover the facts of the world about him, is opening the way to an harmonious adjustment to reality.

Moral life is also subject to law. This is the insight of the prophets. For many generations their forebears had believed that there was no moral law. There was only the necessity of securing the goodwill of the god who was strong enough to support his people against all odds. The wealthy could exploit the poor if only they performed the ritual which kept their god satisfied. The ruthless king could rob the poor man of his wife's affections with im-

punity if he observed the feast day and attended the solemn assembly. Against such a view of religion the prophets spoke with power. They could not believe that the world was a moral nightmare. They believed that God had moral integrity. One could not live out of harmony with the moral law without suffering dire consequences. Disobedience brought destruction in the moral realm as it did in the domain of the physical. God was not an easy-going indulgent father. "Then shall they know that I am God," says Ezekiel, "when their slain lie round about their altars."[3] Such language is not soothing. God's laws work inexorably.

The God-seeking person therefore wants to know what the laws of reality are that by all means he may bring his life into harmony with them. He welcomes the service which all patient observation renders to the religious seeker. Every true reading of the laws of life is thinking God's thoughts after him.

GOD—AND LIFE'S POSSIBILITIES

Giant oak in seedling sleeping
Reassures us as we grope;
Joy that follows after weeping
Brings rejoicing, God of Hope!

Religion consists in giving supreme devotion to the highest possibilities of value which the existing world can yield without knowing specifically what these possibilities are.[1]

—*Henry Nelson Wieman*

I thought that my voyage had come to its end at the last limit of my power—that the path before me was closed, that provisions were exhausted and the time come to take shelter in a silent obscurity.

But I find that thy will knows no end in me. And when old words die out on the tongue, new melodies break forth from the heart; and where the old tracks are lost, new country is revealed with its wonders.[2]

—*Rabindranath Tagore*

IV. GOD—AND LIFE'S POSSIBILITIES

None of us knows what will happen to him in the days which lie ahead. History never exactly repeats itself. One age is like another in some respects, but it is never precisely the same. While one can use statistical averages and predict with a measure of accuracy what will happen to us as a whole, he cannot tell what will occur in the life of an individual.

If the usual averages maintain themselves, many people will live through an uneventful period during the next few years. No great crisis will come to them. But who can tell which of us will have that experience? Some will have a serious illness. But who knows which ones will be included in that number? According to present figures, about 40,000 people in the United States will be killed during the coming year as victims of automobile accidents. But who are the persons who will be sacrificed to this god of speed? No one can answer that question. We face a future of uncertainty.

This fact makes it clear to us that we live in a dynamic universe. The reality in which we live and move is not static. Although there is order present, there is also contingency. We live in the midst of possible changes. The world is not what it was ten thousand years ago, and we can be sure that it will not remain the same as it is today. God is the God of the living. "With God all things are possible." Our life is cast in the midst of a universe of possibilities.

The person who tries to live religiously—seeking to bring his life into harmony with this reality—has a way of looking into the uncertain future. He has *hope*. Hope is one of the "great three" which Paul emphasized. Although one

cannot envisage all that is to happen, he believes that he is warranted in looking forward hopefully. Writing to the Romans, Paul affirmed this mood: "A hope that can be seen is not a hope, for who hopes for what he sees? But when we hope for something that we do not see, we wait persistently for it."[3]

Many years ago a man looked forward hopefully. And yet he uttered a strange prayer in connection with his hope. The writer of a Hebrew Psalm prayed: *"Make me not ashamed of my hope."*[4] Apparently he believed that one could hope in a way which ought to make him ashamed. Even "things hoped for" must be examined critically. A person might hope for something which would minister to his own self-esteem. Such hope would be selfish. It might completely wipe out in that person's life the greatest of the great three: *Love.* Such a hope ought to make one ashamed. A person might look forward and hope that some old value will be restored to him. He would display a spirit which is afraid of what is new. The person who clings to such a hope wants to live in a dynamic universe and yet he fears change. How often people have hoped against hope for the restoration of something which is gone forever. Such a hope is cowardly and ought to make one ashamed.

Again, one ought to be ashamed of a hope *which has no basis in reality.* A hope which is only the expression of a wish and which has no possibility of being fulfilled is only a fantasy. Such hoping wipes out the other of the great three: *Faith.* For who can have faith when he is trying to believe something which he knows cannot be true? "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for."

Our hopes can deceive us. A hope which is not grounded in reality only misleads us and makes dupes of us. We would have both pity and scorn for the person who approached life in this spirit: "I am a creature of high hope. I shall cease eating in the hope that God will feed me

and relieve me from paying my board bill." That would be a hope of which one ought to be ashamed because it has no basis in reality.

What ground for hope can we discern in the reality in which we live and move and have our being?

I

As one watches the development of religion in both the Old and New Testaments, he discovers there a disposition to combat the hopes which deceive. Much hope is present, but it is a tempered hope. The great leaders did not believe that progress was inevitable. They could not always speak hopefully of the immediate future. Sometimes they saw dark days ahead. In fact, theirs was a dynamic universe in which all things were possible—*evil as well as good.*

Some of the prophets found people who had a facile optimism in looking toward the future. These people believed that all would be well with them. God was in his heaven and since he was on their side all would be right with their world. They looked forward to the "Day of the Lord" with radiant hope.

The prophets, however, were more realistic in their contemplation of what was to happen. They saw that the "Day of the Lord" might not bring comfort but trouble.[5] It might come as a day of judgment, because no nation could continue to violate the laws of righteousness without paying the price for that defection. In various ways these seers said to the people, "You hope for the 'Day of the Lord,' a delectable day for yourselves! You ought to be ashamed of that hope, for it is not grounded in reality. God is a God of order. Whatever a man sows, that shall he reap, and no amount of pious hoping can change that fact." They saw that the fact of a God who worked impartially through the moral order might mean trouble ahead for those who hoped for one outcome, but lived according to another. With God, all things are possible—evil as well as good.

In modern days people have entertained a hope similar to the sentimental expectation held long ago. They have felt that the world would rise inevitably upon a ladder of progress. Each year would find a human scene more lovely than the last. Science was learning new truth. Industry was applying it. Salesmanship was bringing its results to the consumer. Each age would have more conveniences than the last. Each generation would be healthier, wiser, happier, and better than the last. This dynamic universe was endless in its potentialities for good.

We have come to realize, however, that we live in a universe that has possibilities for evil as well as possibilities for good. The next decade may be freighted with trouble and sorrow for the human family. It may bring a baptism of blood upon the world. Science has increased the possibilities of producing suffering and pain. It has put new tools for destruction into our hands. We can kill more people. We can mould mass emotion. Because science has brought us closer together, it has made it possible for us to harm each other more easily. A piling up of evil is possible.[6] Sin can become, to use Paul's phrase, "exceeding sinful."

A realistic view of the reality in which we live and move, reveals to us the fact that disobedience to the laws of life can make actual what is still only potential. Confidence in inevitable progress is aware of only one aspect of our potential universe. It does not take into account the possibilities for destruction and retrogression.

The Christian hope shares this realistic temper which knows that all may not be well. The note of judgment is present. Often Jesus cries out, "Woe!" He sees the evil possibilities which lie ahead for those who do not bring their lives into harmony with the God who makes for life. There is a strain of pessimism in Christianity, for it sees a universe in which many things are possible—evil as well as good.

II

But religious hope does not stop there. *It is equally realistic in seeing the good possibilities.* For the immediate future it may be pessimistic; for the ultimate future it holds forth hope. One often sees the tension between the attitude of leaders in religion and the popular temper. In both the Old and the New Testaments, when the people were blithely hopeful the prophets were forecasting doom. And when the people were in the depths of despair, the prophets were the ones who were hopeful. To these men of insight, *evil was always a possibility but it was fundamentally self-destructive.* It would do its perfect work by destroying itself. It would bring with it its own antitoxin.

When the hour was the darkest, rays of new light of hope came from the persons of deepest insight. "The people who walked in *darkness* have seen a great light. *Upon them* hath the light shined."[7] When his people were frustrated by oppression and when they felt that no good possibilities lay ahead, Jesus came to them and said, "The Kingdom of God is within you." He saw a possibility which they could not see. He saw in the God in whom they lived and moved a ground for hope. Evil was not the last word.

We hear such voices today. Even those who believe that it is but a matter of months or a few years before the world will again be engulfed in a bloody war—even they believe that war will ultimately destroy itself. The peoples will one day see the folly of it. Emil Ludwig recently gave voice to this hope. He had been speaking for an hour on the coming world war. He ventured predictions as to how it would start. In its wake would follow great destruction. After telling of the war, he closed by recounting an incident which was a parable of his conviction regarding the future. He had been driving in a taxi to keep an appointment in New York. Traffic was heavy. The taxi was compelled to stop often for red lights. Ludwig was afraid that he might be late for his appointment. He leaned forward

to ask the driver how much farther they had to go. Instead of saying, "Six blocks," the man said, "Only one more light!" Only one more war! Who can tell how long it will be before the evil of war will destroy itself? It may require more than one world war before the nations become convinced that there is a better way to solve their differences, but that ultimately they will learn a better way is the hope which many entertain. Such a hope is grounded in the faith that evil is fundamentally self-destructive.

Religious hope has another faith. Not only does it believe that evil is self-consuming, but *it believes that good is creative.* There are forces of good available which can use even the evil which befalls mankind to produce some good. Jesus' attitude toward the cross is an example of this faith. As he looked forward to entering Jerusalem, he was very realistic in his estimate of what was to happen. He saw the opposition growing and he knew that his death was inevitable. He even reprimanded his followers because they expected something different to happen. Theirs was a hope of which they should have been ashamed, for it was not based upon reality. "You think as men think," he said to them, "not as God thinks."

Jesus' hope lay in the conviction that God could use the evil that men do to further his own purposes in the world. Nothing was so evil but that some good could be wrested from it. "With God all things are possible"—and that meant that we live in the heart of a creative process which has possibilities for good in spite of the evil which is present.

In 1487 an explorer named Dias sailed along the west coast of Africa. He had gone farther south than any sailor before him. Finally he came upon a large promontory. Here he experienced winds and waves and storms. Navigation was difficult at this point. In the light of his experience he named this piece of land, "The Cape of Storms."

But when he reported his discovery to King John II

of Portugal, this monarch saw another significance in what his explorer had found. This cape was indeed a place of storms, but it represented more than that. The king saw here the possibility of a new sea route to India. Instead of calling it "The Cape of Storms," he named it "The Cape of Good Hope." In 1497, Vasco da Gama not only entertained the hope—he discovered that this hope had a basis in reality. He arrived at Calicut, India, by sailing around the southern end of Africa.

The universe in which we live and move has storms. It does not always bring pleasant days to man. If a person is realistic, he sees the possibilities for evil which are always present. But he sees also the possibilities for good. Jesus and his use of the cross indicate that the possibilities for good are almost infinite. Hope is grounded in reality.

Paul can write to his friends, praying "that you abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

IS GOD LOVING?

Power of fellowship unceasing
  Lifting man the brute above,
Make us work with Thee, releasing
  Friendliness, O God of Love.

I have gone the whole round of creation: I saw and I spoke:
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handiwork—returned him again
His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I saw:
I report, as a man may, of God's work—all's love, yet all's law.[1] . . .

—*Robert Browning*

There are, it is said, two thousand million inhabitants of this globe; so long as every one of these goes ahead on his or her own plan or without any considered plan at all, is it surprising that the result is conflict and confusion? Rather, is it not remarkable that things are not worse confounded than they are? Could they go on at all unless there were some kind of directive influence which, partially at any rate, counterbalances the stupidities, the egoisms, and the iniquities of mankind—unless there were, in Shakespeare's phrase, "A divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will"?[2]

—*Canon Streeter*

. . . the sheer power
Of love at one with everlasting laws.[3]

—*Alfred Noyes*

V. IS GOD LOVING?

Some years ago a popular author wrote to Gamaliel Bradford regarding the review of one of his books. In a part of his letter he said:

> What I really want to thank you for is your perception that I am interested in nothing else in the world, seriously, except speculations and wonderings about God. . . . I suppose, if we would all admit it, none of us is really interested in anything else . . . The simple fact is, that, if God does not exist, the universe is but a wilderness of barren horror. If He does exist, life should be but one long effort to know Him and be at one with Him.[4]

God was for him that reality in harmony with which we find our highest life.

In one mood we look out upon the reality in which we live and find that we move in the midst of a vast, mysterious and wondrous universe. We are creatures in it. We are but a small part of it. And in the recognition of the greatness of all that is, we pause in *reverence* and say "God." In another mood we look out and see the order and dependability which are present in the universe in which we move. We see law. And as we work in obedience and *faith*, seeking to think God's thoughts after him, we say "God." Looking again at the universe around us and within us, we discover it to be full of potentialities and possibilities. Always the new is emerging. In a sense all things are possible. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Seeing all of this possibility, a person looks forward in *hope* while he says "God."

But is God loving? Is there love in the reality in which we live and move? As one of Shakespeare's characters would say, "Ay! There's the rub!" Most people would agree

that there are mystery and order and possibility in the universe. But love? Is not love only a cherished ideal of late arrivals upon the cosmic scene—an ideal which has no ground in the reality in which we live and move?

I

This is the first observation which one is compelled to make as he asks whether or not God is loving: *If by a loving universe we mean a universe that gives people everything they want, then certainly the reality in which we live and move is not loving.* There is no evidence that there is a glorified bank teller who cashes our checks upon presentation at the eternal bank. There is no cause to believe that God is a dapper waiter whose eye we must catch to have our orders filled at the banquet of life. "He's a good Fellow and 'twill all be well"—one cannot see that kind of God at the heart of reality.

In fact, the reality in which we live and move often deals harshly with us. Sometimes a natural calamity, such as an earthquake, a flood, or a tornado, wipes out hundreds of people from the earth. Men reap the fruits of their own folly or sin. They suffer the consequences of the ill-will, ignorance, or greed of other people. This world has many evils in it, and to say that God is love in the sense that he gives people what they want or what they think they deserve is a conclusion not warranted by observation. In what sense, then, can it be said that God is love?

II

A suggested answer comes to us in two accounts of the way the universe has come to be what it is. It is obvious that this world has not always been what it is today. Life here is neither static nor eternal. Something has been happening in the past and something is occurring now. How has it all come to pass?

One person gets his answer from the first chapter of

Genesis. He does not read this passage as poetry alone. For him this is an account of what actually happened. Another person picks up a book of science which gives the evolutionary description of the world process. Here he sees the universe of today as something which has gradually grown out of the universe of yesterday. There are many differences between these two accounts, but in one respect they are alike. Both think of our world as beginning with simple undifferentiated matter, and as moving toward greater complexity and concreteness.

In describing our planet they see it starting as "without form and void," or in the terms of the physicist as "matter and energy." This is not the state in which our earth remained. The inorganic took new forms. Plant life emerged with its higher complexity. Animal life came forth with its greater mobility and sensitiveness. More aspects of the universe were brought together in one event. At last man came. He had still greater complexity and greater mutuality with life about him. Memory made it possible for him to keep in touch with his yesterdays, and imagination enabled him to project his ideals into the future. Through a shared life he became a person who cherished new values. He was a part of a process.

This process working for higher complexity and greater mutuality is not something which man created. It created him. He is a part of it. It was going on before he came upon the scene. Many thinkers and observers in these days have been calling our attention to this aspect of reality. General Smuts calls it a "whole-making" process.[5] He sees it as something which is producing more complex wholes. Lloyd Morgan sees a power which is causing ever new levels of life to emerge.[6] Whitehead calls it a process of concretion—something which is making actual more aspects of reality in one event.[7] Wieman sees an "increase of mutuality" at work.[8] We can allow Montague to speak for all of these thinkers when he says:

And so we are confronted with a God, or something very like a God, that exists, not as an omnipotent monarch, a giver of laws and punishments, but as an ascending force, a nisus, a thrust toward concentration, organization, and life. This power appears to labor slowly and under difficulties. We can liken it to a yeast that, through the aeons, pervades the chaos of matter and slowly leavens it with spirit.[9]

This is the language of the philosopher. He sees a process which has produced beings with increased sensitiveness toward the rest of the universe about them and with greater ability to share with feeling the rest of life surrounding them. Jesus approached this same fact in another way. He did not use the abstract language of the philosopher, but he too believed that there is a power working toward the building of fellowship. That was God at work hitherto. Jesus, who was sensitive to the deepest in reality about him, felt that in order to share God's purposes he must forsake his solitary life and his individual pleasures in order that he might add to the welfare of the community. He left his carpenter shop. He healed. He taught. He suffered that others might live. He shared the best that he had. To him this way of life meant working with God, because God had been working hitherto in that direction.

Not only his goal, but his method was built upon co-operative goodwill. He believed that fellowship could not be built by violence. He thought that lording it over others was not working in the way that God worked in men. He proclaimed the method of love, not alone as his own but also as the method which was in harmony with the most life-giving aspect of reality. In that sense God is loving.

III

Of course, this does not mean that God gives us whatever we want. It may mean quite the opposite. It may mean that we harm ourselves because we want what is out of harmony with God. If at the heart of reality there is a

process making for greater mutuality, what is to happen to the person who lives a self-centered, irresponsible, greedy life? If God is loving, what will become of an industrial system which is built upon self-interest alone? If God is love, what will happen to the nations of the world, so feverishly arming in hatred and suspicion of one another? *God's love may be the very rock upon which they will be wrecked.*

Jesus sounded that warning to the people around him. He often described himself and his teaching as the stone which was to be made the head of the corner. Here was reality upon which to build. But he also saw that not every one would accept him. Of such an one who rejected his teaching he said:

> He that falleth on this stone shall be broken in pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust.[10]

This is the sobering aspect of the love of God. If God is love, then the unloving attitudes which we cherish and the unloving life which we live are self-defeating. They are out of harmony with the power in whom we live and move. God's love may be our undoing.

On the other hand, what new assurance lies in this thought! If men seek fellowship and mutual enrichment they discover that already God has been working in that direction. The figure which the Kansas farmer used in writing to Mr. Overstreet comes to mind, "There is a strong wind blowing that helps you if you are going in the right direction."

This principle is further illustrated by a thought in H. G. Wells's autobiography. He states that it is his growing conviction that a world state, a planetary organization, is inevitable. He sees that a world organized upon hatred, greed, and suspicion is destined to be self-destructive. "I believe," he says, "this idea of a planned world state is one to which all our thought and knowledge is tending. It is an idea that is quietly pervading human mentality because *facts*

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and events conspire in its favor."[11] There is something moving us in that direction, inherent in the very nature of things and in the nature of ourselves. The process making for love is real. We discover that to be true when we fail because we are unloving or when we reach deepest satisfaction by loving.

A few years ago I was sitting in a hotel looking out of a window over Lake Michigan. About a mile out in the lake there was a lighthouse. It was a calm day when I first noticed it and I asked myself why somebody built a lighthouse on that spot. There was nothing to indicate the need of one. The lake was placid. No rocks were visible. Perhaps there was once a person who was afraid that rocks might be present and so he built it. Possibly somebody liked the sight of a lighthouse—it gave him a sense of security and a bit of aesthetic pleasure as the light flashed each half minute. It is possible that someone wanted an armchair job and so persuaded his fellow citizens to provide the lighthouse for him. One could easily imagine how people might have projected the idea of a lighthouse and built one.

But on the next day I was convinced that this lighthouse was more than the projection of a wish. It was built for a real reason. The wind had whipped up the waves. Nowhere were white caps to be seen *except around the lighthouse.* Here there was an angry turmoil indicating the presence of rocks very near the surface of the water. Then I was sure that something real was present.

Is God loving? We find that out when, failing to live a life of love in our individual or corporate relationships, we make shipwreck. That is not because we want it to happen. That is because we are opposing something real. We discover that God is love also when, dedicating our lives anew to the attitude of understanding, fellowship, and goodwill, a new peace enters our hearts. This is not a creation of our own. It is the reality in which we live and move.

One of the greatest passages in the New Testament is

the statement in the fourth chapter of the First Epistle of John:

> Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.

"He that loveth not, knoweth not God." This would indicate that the person who asserts with firmness his conviction that God exists, but who does not actually try to live a life of love, really does not know God. "He that loveth knoweth God." He may not use the word "God." In shaking himself loose from many of the superstitions which have clustered about the word, he may have given up the word altogether. But John says that if he loveth—if his life is given to that spirit of sharing and goodwill so supremely shown forth in Jesus—he *is* living in harmony with that reality which some are willing to call God. *For God is that process which is making for greater mutuality and love.*

GOD AND PERSONS

Grace and Truth in flesh appearing—
  E'en for this Thy Power sufficed—
We approach Thee without fearing,
  Thee we trust, O God in Christ.

Love and law our lives fulfilling,
  Bringing order out of strife,
Grant us peace, our spirits stilling,
  God of everlasting life.

For me, God is everything in the universe which tends to produce a fine personality in a human being. Does God, as thus defined, deserve to be called kind and good? It all depends upon whether the personalities which are produced are kindly and good. If you believe that there are kindly personalities and good human beings, then you must attribute to cosmic energy the necessary power to produce these results.

The forces which have produced righteous, kindly personalities must be at least as valuable and significant as their product. Cosmic energy displays, therefore, in one particular space or part of space and during one stage of time—the earth in glacial and post-glacial geologic time —the characteristics of a kindly thought.[1]

—*Kirtley Mather*

Once posit Evil in any form as an essential element of the Nature of Things and you have a disrupted universe as well as a depleted God.

The alternative is by no means to regard Evil as a form of Good, or good in disguise, or negligible, but rather as an interloper, an alien, entering through a gateway that may not be closed (for that would shut out also a priceless good), i.e., the gateway of *freedom. The way to find light on the problem of evil seems to lie, not in abandoning belief in divine personality, but in carrying it farther and deeper: for the more purely personal God is conceived to be, the more he will value and seek to induce personality in others, and apparently the only way to further this is by promoting the exercise of freedom, even though through freedom comes evil.*

Bad as this world of ours is, reddened with natural evil and blackened with moral evil, it may be that, after all, it is "the best possible world"—not for happiness but for *freedom,* and hence for the development of personality.[2]

—*John Wright Buckham*

VI. GOD AND PERSONS

Recently I was sitting next to a young man in a hall where we were waiting for a lecture to begin. Our conversation turned to the subject of God. My companion, who had just finished a year of study in Europe and who had recently begun the active work of the Christian ministry, expressed his deepest concern about this matter. "What I would like to know," said he, "is whether God understands us and cares for us as individuals." He no doubt would have agreed that mystery and order and potentiality are in the reality in which our life is cast. He probably would have concurred in the idea that there is a process which is making for greater mutuality and shared life. But is there a God who understands and cares for persons?

He was giving expression to a hunger which has been present in human hearts for a long time. "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" cries Job as he yearns for someone who can understand him sufficiently to plead his cause. Plato wrote in his *Laws* that there were two diseased notions about the gods.[3] One was that they existed and were of such a nature that they could be cajoled and controlled by magic and prayer. The other was that the gods existed, *but regarded not human affairs.* So we can well ask whether there is a power in whom we live and move who cares for us as persons.

I

An obvious observation to make at the outset is this: *The power in which we live and move has produced persons.* Persons are here. They have bodies. They have feelings. There are values which they cherish and for which they work. Purposes direct the activity of human beings. Friendship, beauty, faithfulness, and countless other precious as-

pects of life are present here. One can hardly say that the universe is completely indifferent to persons when it has produced them.

It is true that there are experiences which would seem to indicate a complete indifference to the welfare of persons. There are occasions when the powers of nature kill people more ruthlessly than a gangster murders his victims. Natural forces follow their relentless way in spite of human discomfort and death. In such a surrounding one doubts that there is anything akin to a good person directing the activity of the universe for the benefit of persons.

But then there are other times when one wonders whether this is not the only kind of world which could produce the values of personality. A universe in which pleasant accidents are constantly happening to satisfy human whims would hardly be concerned with producing persons of freedom and character. What develops a boy's skill in making furniture? Would he develop his patience and skill if the wood never warped, if it always split exactly along the line which he desired, if by wishing he received a piece of wood of the right shape and size? Would he become a growing person if some hand held the hammer each time that he was in danger of hitting his thumb, or poised it in midair if it was in danger of falling on his toes? It is likewise possible that a universe which is concerned with producing persons of intelligence and integrity would also have to have in it these forces which seem so indifferent to human welfare.

In any event we are compelled to say that this is a universe which has produced persons. There is a tablet on one of the buildings at the University of Indiana—a tablet on which are written these words by President Bryan of that institution:

THE UNIVERSITY REGARDS THE UNIVERSE
OUT OF WHOSE INFINITY HAVE EMERGED
ORDER LIFE MIND
ARISTOTLE: GALILEO: SHAKESPEARE: LINCOLN:
JESUS CHRIST

These are facts. Not only has the power in whom we live produced persons—it has produced such persons as are mentioned above.

II

We are confronted therefore with the perplexing question, *What really has produced persons?* What are the "personality-producing forces" (to use Dr. Shailer Mathews' phrase)? The endeavor to answer this question has called forth endless speculation. Since men cannot transport themselves backward over the aeons, and since they cannot look deeply into the creative forces about them, they have been compelled to resort to a faith. On the basis of available evidence they have ventured to make an hypothesis.

There is the hypothesis of a person like Bertrand Russell. For him, matter and energy are eternal. So far as we know, they have always existed. How did persons emerge from this elemental, undifferentiated source? Hear what he says:

> Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving . . . his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms. . . . A strange mystery it is that Nature, omnipotent but blind, in the revolutions of her secular hurryings through the abysses of space, has brought forth at last a child, subject still to her power, but gifted with sight, with knowledge of good and evil, with the capacity of judging all the works of his unthinking Mother.[4]

How have persons emerged? A strange mystery it is, says Russell, that from an impersonal source human personality with all of its values should have come forth. It is a mysterious accident that matter and energy going it blindly should at last produce Jesus, with a mind to envisage the most profound truths of life and with a heart of love for all mankind. If one were to take Mr. Russell to task, protesting that such a belief is too great a strain upon human credulity, he would probably respond as he did upon another occasion, "It is a big universe and accidents

will happen." Such a faith concludes with the conviction that there is nothing personal in reality about us save as it is found in ourselves and in our fellow-men. Some feel that this is the truest interpretation of the facts of existence as we know them. For them the power in which we live and move has nothing to which we could respond as persons.

III

Another faith is held by other people. It is the faith that whatever our conception of God may be, it ought to be a conception great enough to account for the best that has happened. Those who hold this faith believe that a process which has produced personal values must have in it something which is akin to the best which it has produced.

This does not mean that God is a six-foot person. Such persons are not creating worlds. To say that God is personal in that sense is very limiting. The power that produced us must be much more than we are. But can he be utterly alien and blind to the best that is in us? Hear the conviction expressed by Canon Raven:

> Let us get rid of the idea of an old man in heaven, of the anthropomorphism that ascribes parts and passions to the deity: let us make all allowance for the likelihood that we project our own concepts upon that which we apprehend: let us call God supra-personal lest a taint of individuality be suspected: but to rank Him as less than the highest I know, as lower than the personal would be to me false to the whole quality of my experience, false to the data of my observation.[5]

IV

This faith brings with it certain corollaries. *It brings the assurance that a universe which has brought forth noble personality has the resources in it to do so again.* Great people are not just accidents. They have the cooperation of forces seeking to bring human values to realization. Early

Christians liked to think of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." What did this mean to them? It may have meant the God about whom Jesus taught. Jesus was able to summon the highest conceptions of God from his own religious heritage and to unite them in the picture of a Father God. Or they may have thought of the God with whom Jesus lived and in whom he believed. His was not only an intellectual concept assented to by the mind. He lived as if he believed in God. His followers may have been thinking of *his* God when they used this phrase. "The God and Father of Jesus Christ" could have meant even more than the God about whom he taught and in whom he believed. *He may have been the God who produced Jesus.* They could not but praise that in the universe which brought forth the Christ. And they did not believe that he could be accounted for as a mere accidental arrangement of atoms. There was a power who made him. The resources which created him were present for all men.

The realist could protest that the universe has produced a great many other objects and persons. It has also produced epidemics, mosquitoes, and hateful human hearts. But the Christian responds, "We seek the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Something has made him. That is what we are supremely interested in. We would bring our lives into harmony with those forces, with that God. No matter how difficult it is for us to explain the evil that has occurred, we rejoice that good has come forth. Even the evil in the world was used to make Jesus what he was. That reality which produces such persons is our God."

People who hold this faith *do not hesitate to use personal symbols in approaching God.* Jesus said to his friends, "When you pray, say Our Father." The word "Father" is not an attempt completely to describe God. It is the endeavor to approach God as one would approach a person. Some people were repelled by the very human terms in which God was presented in Marc Connelly's *Green Pastures.* I did not feel the same antipathy. I think that a

warmly personal conception of God is nearer the truth than a highly abstract one. Both are inadequate, but the personal terms better express the kinship which I believe must exist between the best which has been created and the power which created it.

> Though in the front of folk I call Thee Lord
> And such high titles use
> As men to glorify their great ones choose,
> Yet in the silence of my heart is word
> Far other. Facing Thee in darkness, I
> "Dear Comrade," and again, "Dear Comrade" cry.[6]

Does this mean that God *is* a person? To approach him as one would approach a person may only satisfy the psychological need of one who feels that he wants to belong to the universe. It may give him the comfort of having a cosmic friend. But this does not yet tell us whether God is a person. Let us remember where we began in our quest to know God. We began with the awareness of the mystery of the enveloping reality which is upholding us. Over us is the infinite depth of the stellar spaces. Our eyes cannot pierce them, but they come to rest by calling the sky blue. In like manner our minds cannot fathom the depth of meaning in the reality of God. Every attempt which we make to capture God in a definition fails. To say that the reality which produces and upholds personal values is a composite of matter and energy is hardly enough. All abstractions remain abstractions. They are only a part. But to me the least inadequate description of this process in which we live—this process with its vastness, its order, its potentiality, its trend toward mutuality and fellowship, its potentiality in producing persons—is to use a personal term. One would be presumptuous in saying that God is a person, *but he is more like a person than like anything else.*

The holder of this faith believes in the third place *that he is understood by God.* God understands us although we cannot understand him. The power that made us knows us

altogether. That is the faith of the Psalmist. "*Thou understandest* my thought afar off." "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?" said Jesus. He believed that the sparrow did not know what happened to him, but the power that created the sparrow was not simply "an accidental collocation of atoms."

The religious approach to God involves this dialectic between the unknowability of God and the care of God for each individual. God is mysterious, inscrutable. He is also "like as a father who pitieth his children." The prophet's words indicate the pendulum swing between these two thoughts of God:

> For thus says the high and exalted One,
> Who dwells enthroned forever, and whose name is Holy:
> I dwell enthroned on high, as the Holy One,
> But with him also that is contrite and humble of spirit.[7]

The artist Borthwick has put the same thought in a graphic way in his picture entitled "The Presence." It is a painting of a cathedral in which the mass is being celebrated. A dozen worshippers are kneeling near the altar. All is bright with the light of the divine presence at the front of the church. At the back is the figure of a woman. She is prostrated near the entrance to the nave. She has felt unworthy to go forward with the others. And yet, standing beside her is the Christ, revealing the truth that while God is present in the mystery of worship he is also present with the least of his brethren.

What is the relation to us as persons of the power in which we live and move? "It is he that hath made us and not we ourselves." This means that we seek those resources which bring forth the best in persons, that we use personal terms in approaching God, and that we come to God with the faith that he understands us better than we understand him.

SHOULD WE FEAR GOD?

Praise God . . . ye that fear Him.[1]

I am the voice of protest and anger,
Against a world gone wrong,
Against ambitious lords and masters, selfish in their grasp of power, blind guides of nations,
And against wealth that exploits the poor and values profit more than human life. . . .
I am the voice of God.[2]

—*Charles G. Girelius*

One thing is certain. This progressive organization of the world is not an invention of men. It was not devised or created by us. On the contrary it created and devised us. We have been produced by it, not it by us. Furthermore we cannot shape it as we like. It is mightier than we. We do not sustain it. It sustains us. We can ally ourselves with it, dedicate ourselves to it as the supreme cause of all existence and the one high vocation of man, or we can refuse to do so in part. We can continue as we have done in the past, to serve it only by accident half-heartedly, with much desertion from it and opposition to it. Yet we cannot tear ourselves from it altogether for it is our very life. Indeed if we do not serve it more faithfully than we have done in the past it will destroy us. For the process moves on whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not, whether we think to oppose it or not.[3]

—*Henry Nelson Wieman*

VII. SHOULD WE FEAR GOD?

Paul evidently believed that there was reason to fear God, for he wrote, "It is with this knowledge of what the fear of the Lord means that I appeal to men."[4] But one can easily imagine someone arising to protest: "Come now, Paul, the day is gone when you can scare people into being religious. You cannot frighten people into becoming good. This dangling them over the pit of fire and telling them what will happen to them if they are not religious does not prove effective in making them followers of Christ. Fear is a low motive to which to appeal."

Another adds: "Furthermore, we have too much fear as it is. We are a scared generation. We may not be afraid of devils any more, and ghosts may no longer frighten us, but we are afraid of microbes, of ridicule, of unpopularity, of failure, of insecurity. We are afraid of sickness, and even when we are well we are fearful that we may not have health tomorrow. We fear each other. We fear death. Why make us fear the Lord too? Our generation has enough fear."

Paul would no doubt have a vigorous reply. His view of the fear of the Lord is illuminated by a remark made by Starbuck in *Moby Dick*: "I will have no man in my boat who is not afraid of a whale." This man expects a whale fisherman to have some fear. It is not the fear that makes him a good fisherman, but he cannot be a good fisherman without it. Without respect for the power displayed by a wounded monster, he will conduct himself too carelessly, too unrealistically.

In the same sense, Paul says that he makes his appeal to men "with the knowledge of what the fear of the Lord means." He sees that there are real issues at stake. He knows that the drama of life means something. There is

a struggle going on between forces. It cannot be a matter of indifference where one casts his lot. Paul would not agree with John Loving in Eugene O'Neill's *Days Without End*, when he says:

> I tell you again what I have always told you: There is nothing—nothing to hope for, nothing to fear—neither devils nor gods—nothing at all.[5]

Such an approach to life heals its wounds too lightly. It is like the attitude of the doctor who attempts to laugh off every ailment. He may ridicule some imaginary ailments. But there are also real enemies of the body. A good doctor recognizes this fact. He makes his appeal for health because he knows how damaging sickness can be. Most people respond to the treatment which is based upon a knowledge of the harm which illness can do, because they want to come to grips with reality.

An interesting comment is made about the relation between Herod the king and John the Baptist. John was a stern, uncompromising, forthright speaker. He did not mince words even with royalty. One would think that Herod would have only one reaction to such a preacher, and that would be to get him out of his hearing. However, the New Testament writer states, "When he heard him talk he was very much disturbed, and yet he liked to hear him."[6]

Many heard Paul gladly. It was not because he was scaring them into being followers of Christ. He spoke most of all about the love of Christ and of the reconciling love of God. "By the mercies of God," he said, "present your bodies a living sacrifice to God." But he made his appeal against the background of a fear of the Lord. The response to the love of God was the more important when one contemplated the results of failure to live in harmony with God. *Living in harmony with God was so urgent because living out of harmony with him was so damaging.*

The God in whom we live and move—the reality with

whom we must harmonize our desires—is not just an indulgent father who gives us whatever we want. The very attributes which we have found in God imply something to fear. *The grounds of faith and hope in the world are also the grounds of fear.* That fact makes life a genuine crisis.

I

Think of the vastness and majesty of the created universe! Such thoughts do not always make us comfortable. We have not a snug little world—a vest-pocket universe which we can tuck into a pigeonhole of our minds. It is vast, mysterious. In one mood a person bows in wonder and gratitude before such might. In another mood he shares the feeling of Pascal as he looked into the heavenly spaces, "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me."

People often fear what they cannot understand. Their religious response to God may be limited to a crushing sense of inferiority in the presence of great forces which they did not produce and over which ultimately they have no control. As Hocking points out, one who is only conscious of the majesty of the unknown may be perpetually celebrating his own inferiority. "He will become a devotee of the fearful and the immense which have always for their own sake an inherent fascination for man."[7]

It is sufficient to say that one cannot actually face the universe in which we dwell, and wave it aside as insignificant. The majestic sweep of the planets and of the starry galaxies through space and time gives indication that a feeling of awe is commensurate with the realities to be faced. If this were all that is known of God, man might indeed cringe and crawl through life. But "what if the all-powerful is the all-loving too?"

II

Most modern men believe that nature is law-abiding. There is something dependable about the reality in which *we* live and move, although some doubt has been cast upon

the predictability of events in small scale phenomena. People today do not think of their destiny as being determined by the whims of capricious gods who have this or that power of nature in their control. For the modern man, all is order.

Is that fact something to fear? "I will have no man in my boat who is not afraid of a whale." The orderly working of the process in which our life is cast means trouble ahead for the person who lives out of harmony with its laws. He cannot call upon a benevolent power to hold him up while he leaps from the temple turret. Jesus called such an action making trial of the Lord his God. It meant flying in the face of the reality who works in an orderly manner.

There are laws of health. We do not fear the laws of health, but we have a right to fear disobeying them. Their very orderliness can be our undoing. The author of *Arctic Adventure* tells of a "man who walked on air." An Eskimo who lived high on a cliff once had a visitor who thought he was stepping on something when there was nothing to hold him up. "Aye, aye, he thought he could jump from one step to the next. But he stepped on the air. And that was the end of Kimik, the man who walked on air."[8] He had failed to bring his life into harmony with the orderly process.

There are also moral laws. This is the conviction of prophetic souls. They believe that nations cannot follow their own bent and that individuals cannot fly in the face of moral laws without bringing harm to themselves. No one can claim exemption from the working of such laws, and all must fear the consequence of trying to flout them.

III

This is a changing universe. It is not static, uninteresting. Always there is novelty possible. New ways are opening before man continually. Who knows the potentialities of this ever-moving universe in which we live?

We can read signs of hope in such a dynamic reality.

God, who is making all things new, is ready to bring forth richer and fuller life for his children. That, however, is not all that is to be said about such a process. The possibilities for good are matched by possibilities for evil. In a closed universe nothing unexpected would happen. In this world there are almost infinite potentialities.

Ortega has said that "to the 19th century many things seemed no longer possible, firm-fixed as was its faith in progress. Today, by the very fact that everything seems possible to us, we have a feeling that the worst of all is possible: retrogression, barbarism, decadence. . . . As an effect of this feeling we enjoy a delightful impression of having escaped from a hermetically sealed enclosure, of having regained freedom, of coming out once again under the stars into the world of reality, the world of the profound, the terrible, the unforeseeable, the inexhaustible, where everything is possible, the best and the worst."[9] Apparently he believes that life is worth living in which there is something to fear.

The powers which destroy have untold potentialities of which we do not know. They are present with us. They can also have their inning in an unfinished universe. Such a dynamic universe makes one hopeful for tomorrow—it also gives him pause.

IV

Looking about us we see also a process working toward greater mutuality—greater love. We see that something is at work producing persons. Is the love of God, the love which is concerned with what happens to persons—is that something to fear?

If God is seeking to build a kingdom of love among men, then those who use another way will clash with the very reality in which they live. That which might have been life for them becomes the rock upon which they destroy themselves. What happens to the person who seeks fulfillment of life by disregarding the rights of others and by

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exploiting his fellowmen? He finds that he is using a method which is out of touch with the reality that produces the best kind of personality. What happens when the nations of the world say, "We believe that each of us ought to think only of himself, that he ought to get from others all that he can get and give as little as he can, that he ought to make his own will dominant by force without regard to the principles of justice"? What happens? We have seen what happens. The nations destroy each other. They are resisting what is most basic in reality—the God who is seeking communion and fellowship among persons.

If God is the power which is trying to bring forth fullness of life for persons, then it is necessary for us to share that attitude or we shall break ourselves upon the very love of God. Jesus, who incarnated the spirit of good will and love in the highest degree, spoke very stern words to those who were harming human life. He was not indulgent toward the destroyers of human values. "Whoever is a hindrance to one of these little ones who believe, it were better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and be thrown into the deep sea."

Paul once gave his friends a word of comfort: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The sentence is introduced with a large IF. God can only be for us if we work in harmony with his nature, his purposes. If God be the power making for love, then the unloving man is out of harmony with God. Such a person cannot but be frustrated in his attempts to seek life fulfillment. The love of God is cause for fear as well as the ground of our hope. The Christian gospel invites all to follow the way of love *because it is aware of the dire consequences of following the way of hatred and selfishness.*

To what conclusion are we led by these thoughts? Just this: The grounds of faith and hope which we find in God are also grounds for awe and fear. God's greatness, his orderly working, his universe of possibility, his love and concern for persons—all these are causes for rejoicing,

and for fear. He who lives contrary to the purposes of God reaps difficulty. There is a bracing realism in the view which sees what living out of harmony with God means. He who senses it can the more eagerly make his appeal to people to order their lives accordingly. "Praise God . . . ye that fear him."

CAN WE TRUST GOD?

Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.[1]
—*Jesus*

I go to prove my soul!
I see my way as birds their trackless way.
I shall arrive! what time, what circuit first,
I ask not: but unless God send his hail
Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
In some time, his good time, I shall arrive:
He guides me and the bird. In his good time![2]

—*Robert Browning*

I am sure that you know that God who created the minnow and who has molded the rose and the carnation, giving each its sweet fragrance, will provide for those mortal men who strive to do right in the world which He, himself, has stocked with birds, animals and men —at all events I will trust Him with absolute confidence.[3]

—*Tecumseh Sherman*

VIII. CAN WE TRUST GOD?

Fear was not the dominant note in Paul's religion. He proclaimed the good news against a background of fear, for he knew the serious consequences of living at variance with God. But it would be a mistake to say that Paul went through life as a scared, brow-beaten man. His basic response to God is revealed in a sentence which he wrote to the Romans, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."[4] He made his approach to God as one comes to a father whom one trusts. He used the word in the mother tongue of Jesus. Jesus himself must have used it often as he communed with God. On the eve of his deepest suffering we read that Jesus in Gethsemane said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee."

This spirit of confidence which greets life with a trusting spirit is magnificent. But has it any basis? Is there any reason to believe that we can have faith in God and entrust our lives to him?

I

Let us distinguish at the outset between *trusting a process and trusting a person.* We say that a carpenter can build a house in a trusting spirit. He works in the confidence that the forces of gravity can be depended upon. The stones will retain their weight. They will keep their consistency. No malevolent demon will come in the night and turn a stone into hydrogen causing all that is resting upon it to crumble. The workman cuts the lumber with the trust that it will retain its length. No devils will play at tug-of-war with it and pull it out of shape. If the wood warps

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it is because the workman has disregarded a law, not because he has offended a little god.

How different is our approach to life from that of a primitive people who believed that all of the powers in which they lived and moved were in the control of spirits—spirits sometimes friendly, sometimes hateful, spirits easily aroused by jealousy, spirits with strange demands which no one could foresee! The modern farmer works in a different mood from his ancient progenitor. While he cannot predict all of the uncertainties of the weather, he sows in confidence. He believes that like will produce like and that there are laws of nature upon which he can count. He is dealing with a dependable universe. He can trust the process.

The modern city dweller enters an elevator with the trust that the cables will hold—at least he does not believe that they are controlled by demons who will let go if they do not like the people who are in the elevator. A man puts his foot on the brake pedal believing that friction will stop the car. He does not think that the brakes are in the control of mischievous sprites who enjoy the prospect of a crash. A large measure of faith is possible for people today because they believe that they are in the midst of a process which is orderly and dependable.

II

But trusting a person is different from trusting a process. One can call a person a complex process, but such language does not take account of differences which seem obvious. A child will leap from a high place into the arms of his father. He has no guarantee that his father will be there to catch him. He may have heard of a playmate's father who failed to catch his son. But it is his confidence in his own father that makes him leap without fear.

A man wants to borrow some money. He has no collateral to offer. There is no guarantee that he will ever pay back the money—in fact, he may be one who gets all he

can and who has no intention of paying it back. But if one has close contact with another person, if he has seen that person live up to his word of honor under great difficulty, then he is willing to venture a loan. He trusts him as a friend, believing that he will fulfill that confidence.

Again, a member of one's family may be in another city. He is suddenly taken ill. His own relatives cannot get to him quickly. But in that distant city they have a doctor who is a dear friend. They telegraph to him. They tell him of the one who is ill. *They may not know what the doctor will do but they have confidence in him as a person.* They believe that he will do the best that can be done under the circumstances. They trust not only his knowledge—they believe in his character.

So some people have trusted God. They have believed that there is one in the universe who cares for his children. He will do well for them. They have gone through life in a serene spirit with the conviction that their lives were in the hands of a good God.

III

In this connection an interesting change has occurred in us. *As we have gained faith in the orderliness of the process around us we have been in danger of losing faith in God as a person.* We could trust the process. Was there any person to trust? The very orderliness—the relentless orderliness of the process—has made us wonder whether God is good. Nature seems to be indifferent to moral values. The rain falls upon the unjust man's land just as it falls on the land of the just. The devastating sweep of a tornado may wipe out the good man's property and leave unscathed the farm of a scoundrel.

Streams will not curb their pride
The just man not to entomb,
Nor lightnings go aside
To give his virtues room:
Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man's barge.[5]

The very basis for trust in the process seems to undermine the attitude of trust in it as the expression of a Father God. If God is fatherly why does he not order the forces of nature so that no hurt comes to those who are well-meaning? In the light of this query it is interesting to note that instead of doubting the goodness of God because of the relentless order of nature, *Jesus saw in this fact the evidence of the goodness of God.* His father had no favorites. He gave to all of his children a chance to achieve life upon the arena of an orderly and dependable world. God's love was all-inclusive, for his sun was made to shine upon the just and the unjust alike.[6] The rain fell upon good and bad alike. Only in such a world could free souls come to birth. This wondrous universe with its inexorable laws was the gift to those who had personalities to build. In such a universe freedom could be realized. The very orderly process is in some measure an evidence of the goodness of God who cares for persons supremely.

IV

The gospel of Christianity comes to us and invites us to face life in this spirit of trust. This does not mean that we lie down and do nothing, expecting God to do all things for us. It means that we can go forward in the confidence that resources are at hand for those who bring their lives into harmony with them.

I was once in conversation with a man who had gone through many difficult times in his life. About three years before, he had faced the possibility of an incurable disease. He had always been a man of the Christian faith, but he wondered what attitude was reasonable in the position in which he found himself. Would power from God be available to combat this dread disease? He had heard of the experience of E. Stanley Jones, who had faced repeated breakdowns.[7] Jones had had recurring headaches. He had been living a life which was wearing him out. No resources seemed to be present to help him to face the difficulties

under which he was laboring. One day in an act of faith he accepted the goodness of God. He believed that resources were at hand to enable him to face these tasks which were crushing him. His faith was justified, for his life was changed.

Knowing of this experience in the life of Jones, my friend approached him with his own problem. He asked, "Do you think that God can give a man health in a case like mine?" Jones replied, "I believe that he will give you health or he will give you *something better.*" That is a spirit of trust which combines faith in a process with faith in a God who seeks the best for every person.

"In its essence," wrote L. P. Jacks, "the Gospel is a call to make the experiment of comradeship, the experiment of trusting the heart of things, throwing self-care to the winds, in the sure and certain faith that you will not be deserted, forsaken nor betrayed, and that your ultimate interests are perfectly secure in the hands of the Great Companion."[8]

This was the venture which Paul made. He did not always get what he wanted. He got many things he did not want. The laws of nature working themselves out gave him a thorn in the flesh.[9] He did not get release from that thorn. He got something better. He received the grace to bring some good out of the evil which seemed without relief. Jesus, who came to God as one comes to a kind father, did not get everything he asked for. Life was extremely cruel to him. His contemporaries committed the worst outrages against his body and against his spirit. And yet, in spite of all that was denied him, he got something better. He was enabled to use the worst which life can do for the highest purposes. Instead of destroying love, the hatred and cruelty of men revealed it.

Cross of Christ, forever telling
  What our deepest faith hath taught;
Even in thy pain is dwelling
  Hope that healing can be brought.

Christ, who bringest good from evil,
Love victorious over wrong,
Give such faith to us and we will
Praise thee with triumphant song.[10]

Two attitudes may be present in swimming. One person may think of the water as something against which he must fight. It seems ready to swallow him. It must be feared. Another person thinks of the water as holding him up. With but slight movements he can bring his body into harmony with the lift of the water. In the same way the spirit of confidence in God can steady the nerves, cool the fever, and appease the fret if one entrusts his whole life into the keeping of Him who cares for persons. No longer the spirit of fear, but the spirit of adoption which says Abba, Father!

GETTING HELP FROM GOD

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
From whence shall my help come?
My help cometh from the Lord,
Which made heaven and earth.[1]

Take some leisure for God, and rest for a little in Him. Enter the chamber of thy mind; shut out all things except God and whatsoever will aid thee in seeking Him.[2]

—*Anselm*

What does it mean to believe in God in the simple practical way in which this belief meets us in actual religion, not the religion that men talk about, or lecture about, or write learned books about, but the religion by which they live? It means to have confidence that there is something, or some one, in the universe like us, though infinitely greater and wiser, in touch with our lives and able and willing to help us if we comply with certain conditions; some one with whom we can work, some one to whom we can look up, some one with whom we can commune, some one from whom we may derive strength. That is what belief in God meant to Jesus, and to St. Paul, and to St. Augustine, and to St. Francis, and to Martin Luther, and to John Wesley, and to Cardinal Newman, and to Phillips Brooks.[3]

—*William Adams Brown*

IX. GETTING HELP FROM GOD

Long ago a man was harassed by a question put to him by his enemies. He said, "They continually say unto me, Where is thy God?"[4] They must have asked him that question as a taunt. He was a man who needed help and no aid was forthcoming from his God. His enemies laughed him to scorn as they ridiculed him with the words, "Where is thy God?"

This man is like many other people who come to a time when they are desperately in need of help. They are no longer able to cope with the problems which confront them. The person who is the victim of a devastating illness feels the need of help to enable him to combat this enemy. The one who must adjust himself to an untoward circumstance finds it difficult to bring himself to the point where he can accept it sufficiently to bring some good out of it. The individual who is being assailed by a temptation, the yielding to which would bring disgrace upon himself and pain to those who love him, needs the power to resist the onslaught. People find themselves in countless situations in which they need courage or poise or a forgiving spirit. They need help.

Should they seek help from God? There are those who follow in the line of the Stoics who would discourage this approach to God. For them religion is highest when it is disinterested.[5] It leads them to accept their lot without complaint and without expecting the giver of all life to change it in their behalf. They believe that it is not within the province of human beings to try to change the mind of God. Theirs is to adopt the attitude of resignation knowing that there is no help possible from the inscrutable God.

There are others who look askance upon the attitude of seeking help from God because so many people are prone

to expect God to do for them what they ought to do for themselves. They want people to stand upon their own feet and use the talents which have been given to them. What they cannot change they ought to be willing to accept with good grace.

Many, however, have believed that one ought to approach God for help. They have not all come in the flippant mood of the one who said, "God will help me—that's his business," nor have they all been infantile in their nagging at God to give them what they want. Those who have had deepest insight into the experience of religion have urged people to hunger and thirst for righteousness and to seek until they found.

> In my distress I cried unto the Lord,
> And he answered me.[6]

I

Should we seek help from God? Yes, *but that is not the only response which we should make to God.* Too often people have God in their thoughts only when they need some help. They are like the boy who writes to his parents only when his college allowance is running low. I think of the person who had tried many different ways out of a difficult situation in which he found himself. Most of his solutions were very inadequate. Finally he thought of one more way out. "I think I'll try God," he said. His response to God did not ring true. His only motive for turning to God was to use him.

Something in us protests against a religious attitude which comes to God always saying, "Help! Help!" It makes God too small and useful. Such an approach lacks a sense of proportion. One who pauses before the majesty of the created universe does not ask alone how he can get help for his particular problem. He stands in wonder and gratitude, summoning his powers of adoration and praise before him who made all things. "Great and marvelous

are thy works," is the paean of one who is not consumed by the urgency of his own need.

Great religious souls have gone farther. They have been willing not only to come to God in an adoring mood; they have come as seekers. Jesus told people to seek and to ask. They were to turn to God for help. Jesus himself poured out his desires before God as one who seeks intensely. Many of his prayers are expressions of gratitude. They begin with the words, "I thank thee, Father." But there were other times when he gave expression to a deeply felt need. "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me." Such response to God does not begin and end with resignation. It has petition in it, even though it ends with the willingness to accept whatever is ultimately given.

II

Should we seek help from God? Yes, *but help for what?* The religious person is eager to discipline his desires. He wants supremely to want the right things. He sees that we might be like little children who want what may hurt them badly and who have not learned to desire what is for the good of all concerned. The quality of a person's life can often be determined by the kind of requests he makes when he is seeking help. Sabatier once said, "Nothing reveals to us better the moral worth, and the spiritual dignity of a form of worship than the kind of prayer it puts on the lips of its adherents."[7]

Jules Romains recounts the prayers which he hears arising in the church:

> O God in Heaven, vouchsafe to cure my leg!
> Matter burst from it yesterday. My God,
> Vouchsafe to fill my shop with customers!
> Help me to find out if my servant John
> Is robbing me! O God, cure my sore eyes!
> Save me, my God, from being drunk so often!
> Lord, let my son pass this examination!

He is so shy. Thou shalt have a great big candle.
Help me to make her fall in love with me,
I will put ninepence in St. Anthony's box.
My God, if only I could get some work!
He makes a martyr of me. Let me die.[8]

This much seems to be plain: God does not help us in everything we want to do. God hinders. He frustrates the plans of man because they are out of harmony with reality. Jesus, who incarnated the spirit of helpfulness toward his fellowmen, did not always help them *as they wanted to be helped.* He brought dissension and fire. So the power in which we live does not give us the help we want *as we want it.* "Ye receive not," said one writer, "because ye ask amiss."[9] So all who come seeking help for this and that would want to purge their desires lest they be asking for something which in the nature of the case cannot be given.

"God is the hardest task-master I have known on this earth," wrote Gandhi, "and He tries you through and through. And when you find that your faith is failing or your body is failing you, and you are sinking, He comes to your assistance somehow or other and proves to you that you must not lose your faith and that He is always at your beck and call, *but on His terms, not on your terms.* So I have found. I cannot really recall a single instance when, at the eleventh hour, He has forsaken me."[10]

This is the faith that God helps those who ask and work in harmony with his purposes.

III

Should we seek help from God? Yes, *but how?* Here again we are confronted with the many inadequate ways in which people have sought to bring their lives into harmony with the life-giving presence of God. A sorry tale indeed is the history of religion if we concentrate too much upon the techniques which people have used to make God give them what they wanted. Such exercises come nearer

to being magic, for they are the attempt to control God so that he must do what people want him to do.

"Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread?" asked the prophet. He saw many people going through motions that were really not bringing them into harmony with him who gives life. The scientist working in his laboratory, the farmer sowing his grain, the mechanic running his machine, may be working more in harmony with God because they are bringing their activity into line with things as they are, than the man who spins a prayer wheel or observes a fast.

We have ways of satisfying the wants which are ours in connection with the needs of the body. God in whom we live brings aid to us as we understand the laws of nature and as we work with them. For the wants of the spirit—strength to bear burdens, unselfishness, sympathetic understanding, endurance in hard tasks, power to overcome pettiness, ability to make the best of a bad situation—for these wants there is also help. *We know these resources are at hand because some people have tapped them.* One does not have to take a long journey to get this help from God, nor does one need to use a particular ritual to please him. They that come to God must come in sincerity and in truth. They approach God as the life-producing, life-giving presence that has brought us here and upholds us.

In those last fateful years of his life when Dr. Ozora Davis knew that his body could not much longer withstand the ravages of an incurable disease, he recounted his own experience: "Now I know that this is a spiritual universe and that the Father God with whom Jesus lived is the supreme reality in it. I am no nearer a definition of God than I was when the year began; but I know that certain facts are true because I have tried them and found them valid. 'Our Father' means such a sustaining reality as can bear one through the deepest waters. 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit'—I understand the confidence and peace with which a man may say this. 'In him we live, and

move and have our being'—this is not a vivid sentence caught from the plea of a herald of Christ in the center of the world's culture; it is the solid fact, the absolute dependable truth of the operating room and the bed where pain is so near and constant that every breath is a form of anguish."[11]

In such a life, God becomes the environing presence from whom help comes.

Father, Thy eternal splendour
  Brightens all our day;
To the weak Thou art Defender,
  To the blind, a Way.

Hearts by conflict rent asunder
  Thou restorest whole,
And we contemplate in wonder
  Each redeemed soul.

HELPING GOD

My father worketh hitherto and I work.[1]

—*Jesus*

The one thing of practical importance for us to know about God is the purpose which He is seeking to accomplish in and through us and other men our fellows, that we may get into line with that purpose and give ourselves to its accomplishment even as Jesus did.[2]

—*Arthur Cushman McGiffert*

Saviour divine,
Who perpetually for suffering humanity
Dost bear the burden,
The dread, relentless burden of redemption,
We pray thee that we thy servants today
May with these weak hands
Uplift a little corner of the weight which crushes thee.

Grant unto us that we may share in thy holy mystery of pain,
Thy sacrament of agony,
Which redeemeth the world.
Give us courage of heart,
That we may drink with thee a little of thy cup,
Thy bitter cup of humiliation, of loneliness, of suffering.
Ennoble us this day with a share in thy work of redemption.[3]

—*J. S. Hoyland*

X. HELPING GOD

The word "help" suggests two ways of responding to God. On the one hand a person may turn to God *for* help. The individual finds that he does not have enough resources for the problems which are his to solve. He turns to God for aid. The experience of William James has been duplicated many times by others. When asked in a class room whether or not he believed in prayer, his reply was, "All I know is that there have been times when I needed help from outside myself and I know I got it."

The day of difficulty is the only time that some people turn to God. It is when they are in real trouble that they remember Him. Their prayer is like the pathetic cry of a dog caught between an approaching automobile and a moving street car. The little animal is helpless in the face of impending doom. For people in great need, God has been a very present help in trouble. One does not desire to discourage any one from seeking the help which he needs in the crucial hour.

However, another approach to God is suggested by the word "help." Help is not only something we get *from* God; it is something we render *to* God. Can people help God? The Christian faith has been audacious in answering this question. It has believed that people can be fellow-workers with God. It has called people to work with a God who has been working hitherto. It has put a prayer into the hearts of its followers which calls men to the dedication of their abilities to cooperate with God. That prayer is "Thy kingdom come."

I

When one offers this prayer *he realizes that he is not alone in the enterprise of life.* He is not living for himself

alone. If he were to pray "*My* kingdom come," then all of his activities would be built around his own desires. He would be concerned with satisfying his own cravings quite apart from any relation which they might have to something outside of himself. The person who makes this his aspiration believes that there is something to live for beyond the indulgence of his own whims and beyond the satisfaction of his temporary impulses. Such a faith believes that one ought to bring his efforts and his ideals into harmonious relation with the God who is active in the world around us.

One cannot but admire the ends for which Jesus strove. He sought to bring life to all men. He was as much concerned about the welfare of a slave as he was about the needs of an owner. He was as interested in a Samaritan as he was in a Jew. A centurion merited attention as much as did a priest. The rich and the poor, the old and the young, the maimed and the strong—all came under the shadow of his love. He sought the way by which each might become his best self and he sought this by opening the avenues of fellowship between men. That was what he lived for. It was what he died for. But to him it was hardly a vision woven out of his dreams alone. He believed that in following this course he was working with God. God was trying to bring forth personalities too. He was seeking fellowship with and among his creatures. This confidence gave deep motivation to the acts and teaching of Jesus.

A young man who writes under a *nom de plume* in one of the English periodicals has recently stated his view of the attitude of youth toward dictators. He sees that the dictators are doing something which people very much need and want. They say to a young man: "By yourself you are nothing. Come into a larger life, as a part of the State, and be fulfilled. . . . Have done with party, with religion, their old women, their tea parties and committees. We have a new idea of citizenship, that embraces all parties

and all creeds, one that dedicates itself to the resurrection of the nation's greatness."[4]

These words have the ring of high-sounding phrases, but they are more than that. They recognize the fact that people are not happy when they live for themselves alone. They want to be a part of that which is greater than themselves, greater than their passing wishes, greater than their fleeting desires. The dictator at least lifts the goal from self-centered living to a sacrificial self-consecration to a cause which is greater than any one individual.

"Thy kingdom come." That prayer also calls people beyond their own narrow interests. It calls them beyond loyalty to a nation. With this prayer in his heart a person does not stand before God saying, "Here am I, serve me." Like Isaiah he enters into a larger experience when he says, "Here am I, send me." Here he can approach the disinterestedness of John Knox, who cried out, "Yea, whatsoever shall become of us and of our mortal carcasses, I doubt not that this cause, in despite of Satan, shall prevail in the realm of Scotland."[5]

II

"Thy kingdom come." This statement is not a prediction. *It is an aspiration.* It is a prayer in the best sense of the term. Sometimes there is in religion the note of triumph, the note of assurance that God's kingdom will come eventually. Such a prayer would be an affirmation, an assurance. It would assert that the future is guaranteed. "Thy Kingdom will come." But in the petition in the Lord's Prayer there is no guarantee of progress. The Kingdom of God upon earth is an object of striving, not a certainty whose coming is assured without the effort of people.

For the Christian this aspiration is given form by the spirit which Jesus manifested and which he communicated to his friends. When people have wanted an object of devotion to which they could give themselves, many have found it in the kind of life Jesus exemplified and the kind

of fellowship among men which he envisaged. His life was light upon what God wanted men to do. A metropolitan airport is an interesting sight at night. Lights are placed here and there indicating the tops of telephone poles and the general outline of the field. But the flier can get little help in landing from these small beacons. He waits until the huge floodlights are turned on. Then the field becomes a blaze of light and what was hazy and indistinct becomes clear. The world continues to seek for a landing place for its objects of devotion. In Jesus it finds a spirit which makes light the meaning of life and discovers content for the kingdom toward which it aspires.

III

"Thy kingdom come." Such a prayer is even more than an aspiration. It is more than a wish. It represents will. The one who makes this prayer his own is enlisting his will to aid in bringing this goal to pass. He believes that people can help God for he has placed in human hands and hearts a part of the task of creating a better world.

This gives a new dignity to human life. The one who believes that we are God's fellow-workers discovers a rock upon which to build his efforts. How different this faith is from the attitude represened in the withering remark addressed to a young man who expressed an interest in going to foreign lands to tell the good news of the Christian message. He was told: "Sit down, young man, if God wants to save the heathen he will do it without your help." How different it is from the conviction widely held in Europe today that human effort is of no avail whatever in bringing God's Kingdom on earth. God is the Wholly Other for whom we must wait. We cannot know enough of his will to cooperate with him. They *only* serve who stand and wait. Paul, on the other hand, assured his friends that "it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

Jesus confronted a group of fishermen one day. They

were at their business of fishing. He invited them to come with him and to share in his larger purposes for mankind. "Come with me and I will make your life easy—*I will catch your fish for you.*" Did he say that? No indeed! No such paralyzing invitation came from him. "Come with me," he said, "and I will make you fishers of men." He wanted them to be co-workers with God in changing human life. He knew that God could use them in working out his purposes. His Kingdom was more than an inevitable event to expect, more than an aspiration to cherish; it was a goal for which to work.

> What is Thy will for the people, God?
> Thy will for the people, tell it me!
> For War is swallowing up the sod
> And still no help from Thee.
> Thou who art mighty hast forgot;
> Art Thou God or art Thou not?
> When wilt Thou come to save the earth
> Where death has conquered birth?
>
> And the Lord God whispered and said to me,
> "These things shall be, these things shall be,
> Nor help shall come from the scarlet skies
> Till the people rise!
> Till the people rise, my arm is weak;
> I cannot speak till the people speak;
> When men are dumb, my voice is dumb—
> I cannot come till my people come."[6]

A large part of our life is given to the reaching of nearby goals. We work for particular goods. Roads must be paved. Trees must be planted. Hungry mouths require feeding. Eager minds need to be trained. Houses must be repaired, kept clean and heated. Countless immediate tasks call to us to be done. And sometimes one wonders whether they are worth doing, whether they merit one's devotion and energy. It is then that we long to be able to pray "Thy

kingdom come" and to know that all of these tasks have some share in the realization of the goal which is highest. We would share the experience of Samuel Longfellow who believed that

> Who works for justice, works with Thee,
> Who works in love, Thy child shall be.[7]

THE GOD WE PRAISE

I wanted a God whom I could look at and admire.

—A college student.

For if we had understanding, ought we to do anything else both jointly and severally than to sing hymns to God and to laud Him and tell of His benefits? Ought we not when we are digging and ploughing and eating to sing this hymn to God: Great is God?

For what else can I, a lame old man, do but sing hymns to God? Were I a nightingale, I would act the part of a nightingale; a swan, the part of a swan; but since I am a reasonable creature, it is my duty to praise God. Nor will I ever desert this post as long as it is vouchsafed me; and I exhort you to join me in the same song.[1]

—*Epictetus*

Mr. Chesterton says that while Buddhist or other "saints" may sit with their eyes closed in contemplation of themselves or of God, the Christian "saint" is always represented with eyes wide open, looking squarely at life at its worst and its best and sure of God all the while. We can never hope to praise God worthily by closing our eyes to hard facts. It must be intelligent praise that honors Him.[2]

—*Cleland McAfee*

XI. THE GOD WE PRAISE

The mood of praise is so much a part of our Jewish-Christian religious heritage that one has no difficulty in finding expressions of adoration in the Biblical literature. One can open the Psalter at almost any point and find there a voice which sings, "Praise ye the Lord!" Or he can turn to the exultant notes of the post-exilic prophets who rejoice in the deliverance which has come to them. In the New Testament the letters of Paul break out again and again in doxologies of praise, while the last book in the canon sings its alleluias to the Eternal. One does not proceed far in the Lord's Prayer before he comes upon an ascription of praise to God: "Hallowed be Thy name."

Expressions of adoration can be heard from other voices also. Aratus of Soli who lived in the fourth century before Christ begins a hymn with these words:

> With Zeus let our song begin! Him never may we men leave unpraised![3]

This is indeed a call to worship. It is a call to ascribe worth to that which is praiseworthy. It is an invitation "to love the highest when we see it." To this ancient writer it seemed unthinkable that one would not adore what is supremely adorable.

Christians in all ages have met together for services of worship. Their voices have been raised in praise to God. They have taken time to cultivate the attitude of adoration. It is fitting, therefore, that we ask ourselves concerning the *place*, the *object*, and the *fruit* of worship.

I

What is the place of praise in religious living? There are those who place it very high. Baron von Hügel writes,

"The first or central act of religion is *adoration*, sense of God."[4] This does not necessarily mean that in the development of religion adoration came first in point of time. Our primitive forefathers may have been religious in order to get what they needed from the gods. They were seeking fuller life. In order to achieve life-fulfilment they believed that they were compelled to placate the gods who controlled their destiny. They may have been religious because they were afraid. We must leave to the anthropologists the answer to the question as to what was first in the development of religion, but von Hügel believes that in our contemporary response to reality adoration ought to have a central place.

A person is in distress when he has nothing to praise. If life deals so harshly with him that there is nothing which he can call good, then he is without hope in the world and an ancient writer adds that he is without God in the world. He who knows nothing praiseworthy has no god. He who has something which he adores has a god. What he worships is his god.

One does not need continually to *use* his object of worship. There are times when he rejoices in it—times when he praises what is good. "Wherein does your prayer consist?" asked St. John of the Cross of one of his penitents. Her reply was, "In considering the Beauty of God, and in rejoicing that he has such beauty."[5] This indicates that one's religion must not always be a quest for fuller life—it can also be a response to what is good with an ascription of praise.

II

A more perplexing question follows: *What is the object of our worship?* What do we really adore? What is praiseworthy? It is at this point that differences in the religions appear. They do not all praise the same things. Not all would agree with Aratus that Zeus ought not to be left unpraised. Few people could bring themselves to sing dox-

ologies to this grim jealous lord of the heavens who ate his wife because he feared that the son she was to bear him would surpass his father in greatness. Not all would agree that Jehovah ought not to be left unpraised. A tribal deity who dashed the little ones of his enemies against a stone cannot call forth the adoration of people who have become ethically sensitive.

If one were to call the roll of the gods whom men have praised he would find many strange figures in that company. One recalls that the vigorous prose of the King James version of the New Testament makes Paul say that there are some people whose "belly is their god." They have no higher object of regard than the satisfaction of their own bodily hungers. If this is what they praise, it is indeed their god.

What does the Christian praise? He has found cause for rejoicing in the majesty and wonder of the created universe. Looking at the stars he praises the power which made and upholds the firmament. Looking at the flowers he praises their beauty, and worships the power which has brought such glory to reality. He realizes that there is a mighty creative power at work upon which he is dependent and before which he is as nothing. He exclaims with the Breton fisherman, whose faith is perhaps the most simple and sincere of all men, "O God, thine ocean is so wide, and my boat is so small." Or he finds himself saying with George MacDonald:

I am a little child, and I
Am ignorant and weak.
I gaze into the starry sky
And then I cannot speak.

For behind the starry sky
Behind the world so broad,
Behind men's heart and souls doth lie
The Infinite of God.[6]

There is here the acknowledgment of a greatness which man did not produce, the willingness to adore what is more than human and greater than human power to create. Contrast the attitude of Major Fortune in Rachel Field's *Time Out of Mind* with that of Einstein the scientist. Major Fortune was the last of a long line of boat builders. He felt the dignity and responsibility of being the head of a firm which had long been known for its exploits in mastering the sea. The time came to launch the "Rainbow"—a last desperate attempt to prove the superiority of sailing vessels over the steam interlopers. As the community has gathered for this significant event, Major Fortune says to his sister while the moon is rising just before the launching, "There's a sight for you, Esther," the author adding that he did it "with a wave of the arm, as if he had somehow contrived to make it rise."[7]

This is different from the attitude of Einstein who writes, "[my religious feeling] takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systemative thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection."[8]

We live in the midst of a majestic universe whose creative power "never may we men leave unpraised."

However, Christianity has praised more than power. Power alone sometimes makes people angry and rebellious. They know that they must resign themselves to it but they will not praise it. Sheer power, to human beings who have developed ethical values, does not deserve adoration. Fortunately there is more than power in the universe. Hosea recognized that there was something which made him willing to forgive his wayward but now penitent wife. The prophets saw that there is a suffering servant who is willing to be wounded for the transgressions of others that they might be restored to fellowship. In Christ men have found love. A Christian rejoices not alone that such a per-

son as Christ once lived—he rejoices that the universe has the power to produce such a person. Love is not an alien in this universe of might. It has been created within it. If in the stars and the mighty forces of earth we have learned of the power of God, in the heart and acts of Jesus we have learned that there is love and care for the least of the children of men.

The Christian's praise is rooted in the conviction expressed by the prophet that "though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly."[9] The Christian is aware that God is great enough to merit our highest adoration and that he is the fountain from which love has been nourished. *The objective fact which calls forth his worship is that man dwells in a wondrous universe, vast and incomprehensible, and that this universe has cradled and nurtured the spirit which seeks steadfastly to create fellowship and which conquers even the ills of life.* Him who is the upholder and sustainer of the universe, Him who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Him may *we* never leave unpraised."

III

And what is the fruit of adoration? Is not worship which expresses itself in adoring contemplation of the praiseworthy aspects of the universe a waste of time? To many people worship has seemed not only an idle pursuit but a positive detriment to effective living. They would be willing to leave Him unpraised.

Practically, this requires us to state why we believe that it is wise for groups of Christians to unite in times of lifting their hearts and voices in praise. Why use this method of ascribing worth to what is worthful?

Americans who have been reared in a culture which has produced a story like Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Great Stone Face" ought to have little difficulty in seeing the value of adoration. This boy who looked for years in admiration upon the stone face on the rock wall soon became like what

he adored. True worship is life-transforming, for as we compare ourselves with the object of our adoration we discover our own inadequacies. The prayer of confession is not far from the hymn of praise.

One calls to mind the words of the writer of the first letter of John. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet manifested what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." *We shall be like Him for we shall see Him* . . . We become like that which we admire. Worship is more than an ascription of worth—it is a production of worth.

There is another value in worship. It relieves the tensions of what someone has called an "anxious morality."[10] Those whose religion is only effort and only a driving process do not find the release from tension that is present where there is a response to what is already given—praise of what is already present. All work and no worship makes religion a grind.

One of our own poets has said, "Thank God for God." To have something to praise is in itself cause for praise. Times of worship are set apart that we may summon our powers of adoration and praise.

THE GOD WE SERVE

If you would know the Master, lo,
He is working in His vineyard.[1]

—*Donald Hankey*

Royce realizes that Hegel is right in demanding that the ethical will must have something more than formal rectitude and freedom; that it must come out of its self-enclosure and participate in the common efforts of man . . . Loyalty to causes is the primary ethical principle. And though equally conscientious men may conflict in their judgment and find themselves serving with equal loyalty opposing causes, there is one cause in which all can unite; for each opponent can respect the loyalty of the other. The absolute rule is, *be loyal to loyalty* wherever found.[2]

—*W. E. Hocking*

One brilliant summer morning at Günsbach, during the Whitsuntide holidays—it was in 1896—there came to me, as I awoke, the thought that I must not accept this happiness as a matter of course, but must give something in return for it. Proceeding to think the matter out at once with calm deliberation, while the birds were singing outside, I settled with myself before I got up, that I would consider myself justified in living till I was thirty for science and art, in order to devote myself from that time forward to the direct service of humanity. Many a time already had I tried to settle what meaning lay hidden for me in the saying of Jesus: "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall save it." Now the answer was found. In addition to the outward, I now had inward happiness.[3]

—*Albert Schweitzer*

XII. THE GOD WE SERVE

In a conversation near a battle-front one man said to another, "You have come down to look at the battle." These were not the words of a general welcoming a war correspondent. This sentence was a taunt. It was spoken by one brother to another. The man who made this cutting remark was Eliab. The one to whom it was addressed was still a boy. His name was David.[4]

David, the shepherd lad, had been sent by his father to his brothers who were fighting against the Philistines. The father was anxious about the welfare of his three boys who were following Saul through the fortunes of war. He sent them some extra food and delicacies. As David approached the camp he heard the threats of the strong man Goliath. He saw that terror was struck into the hearts of his compatriots, and he took a lively interest in what ought to be done next. Eliab, the oldest of the brothers, was irked by David's talk. He wanted to bring this youth to earth and show him his proper place. In anger and sarcasm he said,

> Why now have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the desert? I know your insolence, and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down to look at the battle.

I do not know which words the speaker stressed when he uttered them. It would hardly be necessary to emphasize any one of them. They could cut to the quick if spoken in a monotone. But one can imagine that he put a little extra venom into the verb in the last sentence. "You have come down to *look* at the battle." Not a participator! Just an onlooker!

Such a jibe is often flung at people who say that they believe in God. They are told that they are only idle on-

lookers. They do not do their part in the work of the world because they expect God to do it for them. They believe in God because they want him to do for them what they ought to do for themselves. They would like to be excused from active loyalty to anything, and so they trust that God will do his part and relieve them from doing theirs.

That there have been some who believed in God because they wanted to evade responsibility is obvious. But there have been many for whom the opposite has been true. *Belief in God demanded an active loyalty on their part.* In fact, they have believed that whatever calls forth our loyal devotion and earnest service *is our God.* Whatever we serve through the dedication of our time and money is in truth our God. Notice what happens to those whose faith in God demands active enlistment in his service.

I

Those who have a God to serve believe that loyalty to God is more than praise or adoration. That adoration and praise have important functions to perform in religious living was pointed out in the last chapter. But a religion which exhausts itself in lip service, and which is content to ascribe worth to what is worthful, is one-sided. It is like the person who comes down to *see* a battle.

Jewish religious tradition has kept alive the memory of many people whose belief in God compelled them to act. They did not believe that worship is all of religion. In the Talmud, which is a great treasury of Jewish law outside of the Scriptures, there is found this saying: "That prayer in which there is no mention of the Kingdom is not a prayer." It has been said that it is characteristic of the Hebrew religion never to be content with merely offering obeisance to God. From man's point of view it is not ultimately satisfying simply to prostrate himself at the feet of God in adoration. And from God's point of view it is not enough that man should worship in humility. Always,

for the Hebrew and the God of the Hebrews, there is something practical to be done about it. The Jew refuses to remain forever lost in contemplation; he rises from his knees to undertake a task.

The same thing has been true of the Christian tradition. People there have felt that one's belief in God ought to make a difference in the kind of life one lives. Jesus said that a man cannot serve God and mammon. He can praise both with his lips. He can sing with one breath, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and chant with the next breath, "Just a little filthy lucre buys a lot of things." What he says is not important if he serves one or the other. It is the God whom men serve that is important.

Those who make a religious profession are always under criticism at the point of their basic loyalties. People do not care what a worshiping congregation adores unless that act evokes an active participation in a life which is commendable. People are judged by the God they serve more than by the God they adore. Each one is compelled to ask himself, whether he is associated with any particular religion or not, what his real gods are. What he serves is his God.

II

Those who have a God to serve believe that the ideals to which they devote themselves have a basis in reality. No one likes to ally himself with a futile cause. He does not want to give himself to some phantom of his own mind or some pet of his own prejudices. He desires to feel that he is warranted in cherishing an ideal by the fact that the ideal is grounded in what is real. Not all ideals have been actualized, but true ideals ought to have the possibility of becoming actual.

When David arrived at the scene of battle he found that no one took up the challenge of Goliath. Only fear was present among his countrymen. He could not understand why they did not throw themselves into the fray. The

reason is plain. They were afraid that they would be defeated. They feared that their god was not as great as the god who had produced this giant of the earth. David was not so easily frightened. He believed that the God who was for him was greater than the gods who were against him. He enlisted on God's side with the conviction that he was on the side of right. This conviction made him more than an observer. He took up the fight.

One can detect a similar enthusiasm among many present-day communists. They say that they do not believe in God. But they believe that they are fighting on the side of reality. They believe that their philosophy is grounded upon facts. When they devote themselves to it they have the conviction that the stars are fighting for them in their courses. Psychologically, they are having the experience of those who have a God to serve. Only time can tell whether or not their conception of reality is correct.

This same consciousness of working with a God who is real was present among the early disciples. They had been flogged by those in authority because of their teaching and preaching. But they were undaunted. Responding to their accusers, they said, "We and the Holy Spirit . . . are witnesses."[5] They felt that they were not speaking for themselves alone. They believed that their words and acts had the corroboration of the Holy Spirit. Their aspirations were grounded in reality.

Christian leaders from many nations gathered in Oxford and in Edinburgh during the summer of 1937. They met to face the problems which confront the church in the contemporary world. They were people who were devoting their lives to the tasks associated with organized religion. Was their work important? Is the church something to which one ought to give himself? Archbishop Temple, in opening the Edinburgh conference, expressed the conviction that what they were doing was important in the world as it is today, for he said:

As a watchman set to discuss the signs of the times, I am overwhelmingly convinced of the importance of the Christian church in this restless and disordered world.[6]

A cause becomes divine for us when we believe that it represents more than the passing wishes of men. It becomes divine when we believe that it is a part of the purpose and method of that reality which is producing richer life in man and in society.

III

Those who have a God to serve have experienced one of the deepest joys of living. Men find life as they discover ways of being useful. They experience satisfaction when they find causes which need them. Dr. Arthur Holt recently called attention to the fact that many of our religious organizations have sought to win people by offering them privileges. He said that most people need a call to their loyalty more than they need contributions to their comfort. People need a cause which needs them.

The experience of Mr. Chips serves to illustrate this truth. He had retired from his position as a teacher. The time had come for him to lay aside the duties of active participation as an instructor in the school and he was apparently comfortably settled for the remainder of his life. Then the war came. The young instructors in the school were called to the front. Some one was needed to carry on the task of teaching the boys in the institution. So Mr. Chips was summoned. He took his place again at the teaching task and served acceptably during those war years. The author says of him:

He was a grand success altogether. In some strange way he did, and they all knew and felt it, help things. For the first time in his life he felt *necessary*—and necessary to something that was nearest his heart. There is no sublimer feeling in the world and it was his at last.[7]

The church is one avenue through which people have expressed their service. It has been repeatedly said that people ought to have their roots in a church in the community where they live. What does it mean to have one's roots in a church fellowship? One thinks of the relationship between a leaf and the roots of a tree. If the roots do not send sap up to the twigs and to the buds, the leaves cannot unfold. The leaves get something life-giving from the roots. When that connection is broken they wither and die. Having roots means having a source of nourishment and growth. One would hope that participation in a church nurtures the lives of those who are in it.

But having roots implies something else. The leaves are put forth by the tree in order that they may give something to it. They become little factories which take the sunlight and the carbon dioxide from the air and create the sap which gives life to the tree. After the leaves manufacture the sap it is sent down to the roots to be stored there during the winter. *The leaf that has roots has something for which to work.* The tree lives as it has leaves which feed it; the leaves live as they have roots from which they get their strength and to which they give the fruit of their activity.

One who has a God to serve is "rooted in God." He not only finds sources of strength from God—he finds the object for which he is eager to work, and to which he is willing to dedicate his powers of service and action.

A GOD WHO COMPELS

Necessity is laid upon me.[1]

—*St. Paul*

When Amos said, "The Lord took me," he was expressing that sense of compulsion which is registered in a man's own soul when the facts without and the moral sensitiveness within leap together like the currents of two electric poles into the flash of sure conviction. God took him not by outward sign, but by that inner signal, the signal which can always flame in any man if the moral energies in him are equal to the urgency of the needs that gather in his world. Then indeed the Lord takes him as truly as though a hand were laid upon his shoulder and he were bidden to go.[2]

—*Walter Russell Bowie*

It is true that we cannot be loyal to any tie that has been imposed upon us without our own consent—this is the first premise alike of love and government. On the other hand, we cannot be loyal to any tie that has been fabricated by a needless stroke of our own will. Any object which can hold our allegiance must therefore be at the same time an object of free choice, and an object of necessary choice.[3]

—*William E. Hocking*

XIII. A GOD WHO COMPELS

Let us look for a moment at the pictures of two men. Although they are separated in time by twenty-four centuries, their experiences are similar. As we see them they are both standing before kings.

The first picture is that of a monk standing before an emperor. Martin Luther faces Emperor Charles. Leo X who had recently excommunicated Luther from the church, had urged Charles to ban him also from the empire. This the king proposed to do by an imperial edict at the Diet of Worms. But the German princes, not unmindful of the reformer's manly denunciations of the extortions and tyranny of the ecclesiastical authorities, persuaded the king not to condemn him unheard. Luther was therefore summoned before the Diet to answer for himself.

When the king had Luther before him, he demanded that Luther retract the teachings which he had promulgated contrary to the orders of the church. After a day's deliberation Luther replied that he could not retract anything that he had written until it was proved contrary to Scripture or right reason. When asked finally whether he would recant, he replied that his conscience would not permit him to do so, and, according to an early and trustworthy tradition, closed with the words: "Here I stand! I can do naught else! God help me. Amen."

The second picture is that of a prophet standing before two kings. The prophet is Micaiah and the kings are Ahab of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah.[4] These two monarchs had discussed the possibility of a military expedition against a neighboring territory. After they had agreed to pool their resources, one of them suggested that they inquire for the word of the Lord in the matter. Four hundred prophets were consulted. With one voice they prophesied success for

his military venture. But Jehoshaphat, evidently disturbed by the uncritical acclaim which their inquiry evoked, asked, "Is there not here another prophet of the Lord of whom we may inquire?" "There is another," replies Ahab, adding candidly, "but I hate him; for he never prophesies for me good, but only evil." At Jehoshaphat's suggestion he is sent for, nevertheless.

The messenger who summons Micaiah says to him, "See, now, the prophets with one consent have spoken good to the king; let your words, I pray you, be as the word of one of them and speak good." Hear the prophet's answer! "As the Lord lives, I will speak what the Lord speaks to me." Standing before the kings he can give no assurance of success to them and as a result he is thrust into prison.

Both of these men would have agreed with Paul when he said, "Necessity is laid upon me." They could not say what they would like to say. They could not say what they knew others would like to have them say. They were *compelled.* Something more objective than their own desires or the desires of others was driving them.

When Luther says, "I can do naught else," he means that the truth has laid hold upon him and has compelled him to speak as he understands it. When Micaiah insists that he must say what the Lord tells him to say, he means that he must bring his prophecies into line with the facts as they are and with the God who is. When Paul stands before King Agrippa and says that he cannot be disobedient to the heavenly vision, he means that he has been laid hold upon by something outside himself. All are compelled.

Many people have experienced the *God who compels.* They have been driven by the facts as they saw them, and they have been laid hold upon by the conviction of the validity of ethical and spiritual values. Those who have a God who compels believe that there *is a reality in harmony with whom they must live.* Loyalty to this God does not always make them feel good, it does not always make them

popular with others, but ultimately they believe that it builds their lives upon a rock.

I

Loyalty to the God who compels does not always make people feel good at the moment. But true religion does not make a god of its feelings. It seeks reality first. It believes that one must adjust his feelings to what is, rather than to deceive himself by the fantasy that things are as he feels.

True religion is not far removed from true science in this respect. True science is willing to change its theories to fit the facts. To understand this spirit one needs but to recall the words of Thomas Huxley in a letter to Charles Kingsley:

> Science seems to me to teach in the highest and strongest manner the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the will of God. Sit down before facts as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads or you shall learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this.[5]

Necessity is laid upon the true scientist. He cannot always make things look as he would like to have them look. He is compelled. However, there is a science, falsely so called. It is the science which tries to see things as people want to have them seen. Ecclesiastical authorities who were eager to safeguard a particular view of the universe, sought to force the scientists to see what they wanted them to see. Copernicus was supposed to see the sun move around the earth. Today there are states which expect their scientists to make declarations about racial stocks—declarations which will be in harmony with a political policy. True science dare not allow itself to be compelled by anything but the facts. It cannot conclude as did a speaker who said, "These are the arguments upon which I base my facts."

True religion is like science in that its adherents seek to bring their lives into harmony with the ethical and spiritual realities as the scientist seeks to bring his theories into harmony with the physical facts of the universe in which we live.

Just as the spirit of science can be prostituted, so the same can happen to the spirit of religion. Prophets can persuade themselves that their own desires are the will of God. They can preface their remarks with "Thus saith the Lord." This does not necessarily mean that God is speaking through them. It may only mean that they are saying what they wish to say and forging God's endorsement.

Religion is more than using God as the authority for our judgments. It is being willing to submit our judgments to the test of reality. Jesus knew that many people wondered whether he was speaking for God, or whether he was speaking from within himself alone. And it was his conviction that one must bring his life into harmony with the real God, rather than expect God to adjust his laws to our wishes.

II

Loyalty to the God who compels does not always make one popular with his fellows. Prophets are often unadjusted people in the sense that they are not acceptable in the status quo. They do not find comfortable receptions among the people with whom they live since they do not always say what people want them to say. Hosea had reason to remark that

> A prophet is a crazy fool,
> A man inspired is a man insane.[6]

Jesus pointed out that one cannot always gain the approval of the society in which he moves. "Woe is you if all men speak well of you." Too many people are interested parties in bending the community pattern to their own liking to warrant the conclusion that the voice of the

majority is always the voice of God. Man's ways are not always God's ways. The true prophet is compelled often to resist the popular will.

There is a contemporary attitude which makes much of the individual's finding status in a society. He needs recognition. He hungers for approval. He wants to be accepted. In such a time there is need for the attitude which will resist the current standards if they are out of tune with the facts of spiritual growth and ethical progress.

Anna Louise Strong pays this high tribute of respect to her father: "He is perhaps the only man I ever knew who almost follows the ethics of Jesus: he can die for a faith but he cannot renounce an ideal. By words and life he taught me that neither money nor fame nor human opinion are to be counted against being 'right' in one's soul."[7]

Four hundred prophets foretold success for Ahab's expedition. One prophet foretold defeat. He could be called a fanatic. He was a supreme individualist. He dared to pit his judgment against the judgment of the four hundred (an interesting figure). The king knows what to do with this kind of prophet. "Put this fellow in the prison house," he orders, "and feed him scant prison fare of bread and water until I come in peace." But Micaiah answers, "If you do indeed return in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me."

That conclusion is not wild-eyed fanaticism. It is realism. He is willing to be tested by the facts. He knows that one must be compelled by the "given." And when such a prophet is alone against the judgment of many, he is still willing to remain alone since he is compelled by the God of things as they are.

III

Loyalty to the God who compels does not necessarily make us do what we do not like to do. Nor does it always make men unacceptable to their contemporaries. Eventually *loyalty to the God who compels is the only satisfying way*

of life. One does not find life by building upon sand. The truth makes man free.

Do you remember the course which Micaiah followed when he was first summoned before Ahab? When asked by the king whether or not the military campaign ought to be undertaken, the prophet gave this encouraging reply: "Go up and prosper; for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the King." This was an echo of what the four hundred had said. The vote stood now at four hundred and one *ayes* with no dissenting voices. But the king detected a lack of conviction in Micaiah's reply. Even the king wanted the truth rather than smooth words, for he said, "How many times must I adjure you that you speak to me *nothing but the truth* in the name of the Lord?"

The Christian faith is rooted in the conviction that the truth which makes men free is good news. Paul said, "the love of Christ constraineth me." He had been laid hold upon by a fact. It was the fact of Christ. This universe had produced love incarnate. One could not live as if this had never happened. The love of God which had become a reality in Christ pursued him like a hound of heaven. Necessity is laid upon him but it is the necessity of acknowledging the validity of love and the need of obeying the compulsion to share in the purposes which Christ had for mankind.

In these three chapters we have been asking ourselves who believes in God. He has a God who has something to adore and to praise. Whatever he adores is his God. He who has something which calls forth his earnest service and which impels him to enlist his life has a God. Whatever he serves is his God. And he who is compelled to act in accordance with what is, not with what he would like alone nor with what adjusts him well to his fellows, but with what brings him into harmony with reality—he too has a God. *He who calls forth our adoration, who enlists our effort, and who compels our loyalty is our God.*

WHAT FAITH IN GOD DOES

This is life eternal, to know God . . .[1]

Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise; for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee.[2]

—*St. Augustine*

How can it possibly fail to steady the nerves, to cool the fever, and appease the fret, if one be sensibly conscious that, no matter what one's difficulties for the moment may appear to be, one's life as a whole is in the keeping of a power whom one can absolutely trust?[3]

—*William James*

XIV. WHAT FAITH IN GOD DOES

It is one thing to have a correct idea of God and quite another to have God as a present reality in one's life. In these chapters we have been trying to clarify our idea of God. We have tried to discover what the reality is in which we truly live and move and have our being.

Let us summarize again. Looking about us we see the mystery and majesty of the created world. We recognize our creaturehood in the presence of infinite creative power. We see a universe which is orderly and law-abiding. There is integrity present in it. We see possibility in the universe about us. God maketh all things new. Hope is legitimate in such a world. We see a process at work making for greater complexity and fellowship. The way of love has a foundation in reality. We see a power which makes and saves persons. There is that present in reality which is great enough to produce what we consider highest and best. When we use the word "God" it calls to mind the creative power which must be at least as wise and good as the best which has been produced.

But can one not imagine some person saying, "You have given us an idea of God—what of it? What difference does that make in our lives?" This pragmatic attitude is shared by many people today. I think of the young man whose task was to write a paper for a course. He decided that he would write on the theme, "Is There a God?" I asked him what difference it would make in his life if he were to prove to his own satisfaction that there is a God. He thought a moment and replied that he thought it would make no difference. He would live as he had always lived. So I asked what difference it would make to him if he proved that there is no God. Again

he replied that he thought it would make no difference. In other words God was irrelevant to life.

I was once in a group of about twenty people when suddenly one of our number arose and shouted in a loud voice, "Victory! Victory!" One could easily imagine him reporting the result of a crucial battle for his country. Or he could have been announcing the result of a hotly fought athletic contest. Such enthusiasm should have been contagious. All of us should have joined him in the shout. But none of us paid more than passing attention to his exclamation. Why? He was a conductor on a train announcing the next station. This noble word "Victory" had become associated with a little wayside town—a bit of geography that meant nothing in our lives.

In much the same way the word "God" has sometimes become associated with aspects of life which seem to mean nothing to people. They feel that they can go on living without any thought of God. The New Testament writer did not believe this. He said, "*This is life eternal,* that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." To him it was life to know God and to live harmoniously with him. Indeed, one could reverse his sentence and say that whatever gives life is God. God is that in reality which is life-producing and life-fulfilling. He is not far from any one of us, for it is he in whom we have life.

What does faith in such a God—a God who is majestic, who works in accordance with law, who is making all things new, who makes for love and fellowship, and who produces and saves what is truly personal in us—what does faith in such a God do for people?

I

One is driven to say that *people do not need faith in God to stay alive.* The word does not have to be on their lips. The thought does not need to be in their minds.

They must live in harmony with the reality which upholds life, but they do not need to formulate a theology or use a word to describe it. A child can turn on a light without giving thought to the principles of electricity. He can enjoy a radio without knowing the intricate processes which have made that experience possible. *But he must adjust himself to the reality.*

People who believed that their bread and butter depended upon cajoling the gods who governed the rain and the fertility of the soil also believed that they had to give some attention to these deities. Proper offerings and suitable prayers were necessary if the gods were to give them enough to eat. In such a day faith in the gods appeared necessary in order to assure food and clothing for people. In the same way a nation which believes that its welfare depends upon retaining the favor of its god will give time and energy to keeping that god well disposed toward national policies. He cannot be forgotten with impunity.

Today, however, we use other methods of securing from nature the bread and butter which our bodies need, and we are certain that God is not a national deity. We live along at our normal pace. We cannot see the need of bringing God into our experience. As one man said to me recently, "As long as I try to live in the right way, that is all that matters." What would faith in God add to such a person's life?

II

A faith in God *brings with it a conviction that there is a meaning to the universe in which we live and of which we are a part.* It is not just an accidental and meaningless jumble. Something is happening which can have high significance.

There are two ways of listening to a selection by a symphony orchestra. One listener says that he hears noise with-

out meaning. He sees much activity, but for him there is nothing which holds the activity together. Each member of the orchestra appears to be doing something which he likes to do. One scrapes the strings of a violin, another blows wind through a tube, while a third pounds vigorously on a piece of stretched hide. Sometimes a series of sounds makes a pleasing impression. At other times there are discordant sounds and strident notes. To such a listener the symphony is just the filling up of thirty minutes with sound without meaning.

Another person follows the score carefully. He sees that a theme is sounded forth at the outset. It is repeated in many ways. Sometimes one instrument picks it up while others support it. There are moments when one can hardly find the theme amidst many runs and variations. But again the whole orchestra is playing it in unison. The whole musical performance takes on meaning. Even the discords have their place in developing the theme which the artist has in mind.

People with a faith in God have been busy playing their own instruments, but they have felt that running through all this welter of activity there are themes being worked out. The universe is beating its music out. There is a power making for righteousness. There is a process making for greater concreteness, greater mutuality. The universe with all of its diversity is held together by some order, some theme.

It is conceivable that a person could play in a symphony orchestra without knowing what the whole symphony was about. He could even play his drum by watching his own score, quite oblivious to the meaning of the whole performance. He could earn his three not-too-square meals a day. But something happens to him when he senses the meaning of it all. He realizes that he is a part of a unity and a plan. Faith in God can do that same service for people.

III

Faith in God is also *a source of power*. L. P. Jacks once wrote, "There is a power somewhere, in the height above or in the depth below, waiting to back me up. That power, if I find it, shall be my God."[4] That power will back him up if he lives in harmony with it. That power will crush him if he tries to act contrary to its laws. Power comes to him who discovers the reality which is basic for human welfare.

The players in an orchestra do not simply do what they want to do. The cellist does not play a scale at will. The flutist who looks so earnest is not merely making his fingers do a dance on a pipe. Each of them is playing notes which are a part of a deeper purpose. The player who brings his playing into harmony with that purpose has power in contributing to the beauty of the symphony. In like manner the composer could not make music out of any random combination of notes. The notes are based upon deeper laws. An orderliness in the vibrations is what makes possible the scales upon which the music is built. The music has power as it is based upon the reality which makes harmony possible. It is not a chance mixture of notes dependent upon the whims of a composer.

Suppose a scientist were to enter his laboratory tomorrow, heaving a sigh and saying as he went in, "I wonder whether the gods will act in an orderly way today or whether they will facetiously make hydrogen and oxygen produce diamonds." A scientist in that mood could have little power. He would be limp and uncertain, for he could not work with assurance. His faith in the order of the universe gives him power. He can work in faith.

The one who is trying to save and to remake human life may often become discouraged. But if he believes that God is the power who is making all things new, that this universe is full of potentialities, he can pick up his work

with new power. He believes that there is real ground upon which he can stand.

I recently had that feeling of power in a man who was working for peace. He has been maligned many times. He has been called a dreamer. His methods of striving for peace may not be right, but he works with a faith that God is working for peace. He believes that selfishness and national greed and hatred are ultimately self-defeating. The universe is against such policies. So, although he suffers and is rejected, he retains power and poise.

Power from God does not mean that God does for us what we ought to do for ourselves. His power comes when we bring our lives into relation with him.

IV

Faith in God *gives one a sense that in his deepest life he belongs to a reality which understands him.* Not only does he believe that his body is of the dust of the earth, but he believes that his spirit—the realm of feeling and will and thought—also has kinship in the universe.

I know that the God-needing individuals, as H. G. Wells calls them, have been reproached because they want a cosmic friend.[5] They have been accused of projecting upon reality their longings for coddling by their parents. That bit of psychological insight does not, however, dispose of the matter. In the same way one could summon unfortunate experiences with parents as the reason that other people do not want a God who understands them and cares for them. The fact is that we have the qualities of persons, and the reality in which we live has produced us. A warmth, though not an easy comfort, comes to us as we remember that it is possible to approach God as one would come to a person. In the words of Browning,

". . . there is that in me
Which turns to thee, which loves or which should love."

A PRAYER

Spirit of Creative Power
  Far transcending human strife,
Give to formless, richer beauty,
  And to lifeless, fuller life.

God who workest hitherto
  Bringing nobler selves to birth,
Use man's earnest upward striving
  For the good of all on earth.

HYMN TO GOD

(*Tune:* Stuttgart)

Flaming stars in endless spaces
  Sending forth their peaceful light
Make us pause with upraised faces
  Wonder-stilled, O God of Might.

Whirling orbs and life unresting,
  Following order without flaw
Give to human spirits questing
  Faith to work, O God of Law.

Giant oak in seedling sleeping
  Reassures us as we grope;
Joy that follows after weeping
  Brings rejoicing, God of Hope.

Power of fellowship unceasing,
  Lifting man the brute above,
Makes us work with Thee, releasing
  Friendliness, O God of Love.

Grace and Truth in flesh appearing—
  E'en for this Thy power sufficed—
We approach Thee without fearing,
  Thee we trust, O God in Christ.

Love and law our lives fulfilling,
  Bringing order out of strife,
Grant us peace, our spirits stilling,
  God of Everlasting Life.

A SERVICE IN PRAISE OF GOD

GOD IS MYSTERY

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!

GOD IS ORDER

The law of the Lord is perfect,
restoring the soul:
The testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple.

GOD IS THE NEW

With God all things are possible, for he maketh all things new.

GOD IS LOVE

For love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God.

GOD WAS IN CHRIST

Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father: no one cometh unto the Father but by me."

GOD IS SPIRIT

And they that worship Him shall worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,
And spirit with spirit can meet,
Closer is He than breathing,
And nearer than hands and feet.

For in His will is our peace.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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(2) From an article by E. H. Jeffs in *The Christian World*, London, November 15, 1934.
(3) Quoted in *Can I Know God?* by Frederick B. Fisher, page 19. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1934.
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(5) See *The Religious Consciousness* by James Bissett Pratt, Chapter I. Macmillan, New York, 1927.
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(7) Ernest Dimnet, *What We Live By*, page 280. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1932.
(8) See John 18:33-38.
(9) For the account of Paul's experience in Athens, see Acts 17:16-34.

II. GOD—THE GREAT MYSTERY

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(4) For comments on Schleiermacher's view, see McNeill, *Makers of Christianity*, pages 253-262. Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1935. "Schleiermacher does not labor over rational proofs of the existence of God. For him the recognition of the universality of the 'feeling of dependence' renders such proofs needless." (Page 261.)

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(3) Ezekiel 6:13.

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(2) Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali,* page 29. Macmillan, New York, 1915.
(3) Romans 8:24, 25 (American translation by E. J. Goodspeed).
(4) Psalm 119:116 (from an American translation edited by J. M. P. Smith).
(5) "Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!
What, then, does the day of the Lord mean to you?
It is darkness, and not light."
Amos 5:18 (Smith)
(6) This thought has been given new emphasis in the recent works of Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr.
(7) Isaiah 9:2.

V. IS GOD LOVING?

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(5) Jan Christian Smuts, *Holism.* Macmillan, New York, 1926.

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(6) Lloyd Morgan, *Emergent Evolution.* Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1924. "For better or for worse while I hold that the proper attitude of naturalism is strictly agnostic, therewith I for one, cannot rest content. For better or worse, I acknowledge God as the Nisus through whose Activity emergents emerge and the whole course of emergent evolution is directed. Such is my philosophic creed, supplementary to my scientific policy of interpretation" (page 36).

(7) See his chapter on *God* in *Science and the Modern World,* pages 249 ff. Macmillan, New York, 1927.

(8) See his chapter on *The Concept of Supreme Value* in *Normative Psychology of Religion,* pages 45 ff. Crowell, New York, 1935. The authors are Regina Westcott Wieman and Henry Nelson Wieman.

(9) W. P. Montague, *Belief Unbound,* page 74. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1930.

(10) Matthew 21:44.

(11) H. G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography,* page 668. Macmillan, New York, 1934.

VI. GOD AND PERSONS

(1) Kirtley F. Mather, *The Religion of a Geologist,* pages 16, 17. American Institute of Sacred Literature, Chicago, 1931.

(2) John Wright Buckham, *Christianity and Personality,* page 119. Round Table Press, New York, 1936.

(3) Quoted in *The Spirit of Man,* an anthology compiled by Robert Bridges. Plato writes, "Neither you nor your friends are the first to hold atheistical opinions; there have always been plenty of persons suffering from this disease—and I can tell you how it has gone with a good many of them who were in your condition: how not one of them who took up in his youth with this opinion that there are no gods, ever continued until old age faithful to his conviction; although I grant that the other two diseased notions concerning the gods may and do persist with a few persons: the notion I mean that gods exist but that they regard no human affairs, and that other

notion that they regard human affairs but are easily persuaded by sacrifice and prayer."

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(7) Isaiah 57:15.

VII. SHOULD WE FEAR GOD?

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(2) Charles G. Girelius, from a poem entitled "Voices Prophetic" in *The Christian Register,* Boston. Used by permission of the author.

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(4) II Corinthians 5:11 (Goodspeed).

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VIII. CAN WE TRUST GOD?

(1) Luke 23:46. Jesus made the words of the Psalmist (Psalm 31:5) his own as he came to the end of his earthly life.

(2) Robert Browning, from *Paracelsus* (in *The Complete Works of Robert Browning,* page 22. Macmillan, New York, 1917).

(3) From a letter of General Sherman to DeWitt Talmadge in *Sherman, the Fighting Prophet,* by Lloyd Lewis, page 649. Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1932.

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(7) For an account of this experience see *The Christ of the Indian Road* by E. Stanley Jones, pages 17-20. Abingdon, New York, 1925.
(8) L. P. Jacks, *Religious Perplexities,* pages 92-93. George H. Doran Company, New York, 1923.
(9) Paul describes this experience in II Corinthians 12:7-9.
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IX. GETTING HELP FROM GOD

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(2) Quoted by McNeill, *Makers of Christianity,* page 111.
(3) William Adams Brown, *The Minister, His World and His Work,* page 83. Cokesbury Press, Nashville, 1937.
(4) Psalm 42:3.
(5) This note is repeatedly sounded in Walter Lippmann's *Preface to Morals.* See pages 326, 327. Macmillan, New York, 1929.
(6) Psalm 118:5.
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(10) From an article by Mahatma Gandhi entitled "Why Voluntary Poverty?" in *The World Tomorrow,* December 1931, page 399.
(11) Ozora Davis in an article entitled "Life-giving Convictions" in *The Congregationalist,* May 30, 1929, page 734.

X. HELPING GOD

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(7) From his hymn, "O God, In Whom We Live And Move."

XI. THE GOD WE PRAISE

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(7) Rachel Field, *Time out of Mind*, page 60. Macmillan, New York, 1935.
(8) Albert Einstein, *The World As I See It*. Covici-Friede, Inc., New York.
(9) Psalm 138:6.
(10) Margaret Prescott Montague uses this expression in her account of *Twenty Minutes of Reality*.

XII. THE GOD WE SERVE

(1) This sentence, framing itself in the mind of Donald Hankey, became a motivating force in causing him to dedicate his life in service to the underprivileged. "The idea became firmly impressed on my mind that it was in working in the poorer parts of English cities that I should learn to have real faith." See K. G. Budd, *A Modern Pilgrimage*, page 28. Scribner, New York, 1931.
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XIII. A GOD WHO COMPELS

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XIV. WHAT FAITH IN GOD DOES

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(4) Quoted by F. B. Fisher, *Can I Know God?* pages 19, 20. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1934.
(5) See H. G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography*, pages 575, 576. Macmillan, New York, 1934. In criticizing the view which he presented in *God, the Invisible King*, Wells says, ". . . what these God-needing people require is the sense of a Father on whom they can have the most perfect reliance. They are straining back to the instinctive faith of 'little children' that ultimately everything is all right. They are frightened people who want to be told that they need not brace up to the grimness before them. With all the will in the world I could not bring myself to present my God as that sort of God. I could invent a heartening God but not a palliating God."

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